

FEATHERS

Published by the Schenectady Bird Club

JANUARY, 1941

VOL.3, NO.1

THIRTY SPECIES ON SCHENECTADY'S CHRISTMAS CENSUS

Weather Far from Wintry on Day of Hike -- Tree Sparrows Exceptionally Numerous -- Robin, Waxwing, Shrike, Meadowlark, Cowbird, Creeper, And Various Hawks among the Interesting Records -- Pine Siskins Are Again on List, and Owls Again Conspicuously Absent

Esly Hallenbeck, Chairman, Christmas Census Committee

SCHENECTADY, N. Y. (Mohawk River from Lock 8 to Mohawk View, Collins Lake, Woestina Sanctuary and lower Rotterdam Hills, Central Park, Vale and Parkview Cemeteries, Meadowdale, Indian Ladder, Pine Barrens, Carman, Consaul Road, Wattervliet Reservoir, Fuller Road, and intervening territory.) Dec. 22; 7:30 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. Sky overcast, some mist and brief, light rain; minimum of snow on ground, with fields mostly snowless; fair amount of open water in river and fast streams, but minimum elsewhere; temp. 36° at start, 39° at return. Twenty-nine observers working in 9 parties. Total party hours afield, 51-1/2; total party miles 220 (48 afoot, 172 by car incidental to trips afoot). American Merganser, 27; Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Rough-legged Hawk, 1; Marsh Hawk, 2; Sparrow Hawk, 5; Ruffed Grouse, 5; Ring-necked Pheasant, 6; Herring Gull, 23; Hairy Woodpecker, 12; Downy Woodpecker, 36; Blue Jay, 148; Crow, 783; Black-capped Chickadee, 266; White-breasted Nuthatch, 83; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 12; Brown Creeper, 1; Robin, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 19; Cedar Waxwing, 1; Northern Shrike, 1; Starling, 1250; English Sparrow, 225; Meadowlark, 1; Cowbird, 2; Pine Siskin, 15; Goldfinch, 84; Slate-colored Junco, 28; Tree Sparrow, 446; Song Sparrow, 16. Total, 30 species, 3501 individuals. Ring-billed Gull, Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Prairie Horned Lark also recorded in the territory during Census Week. -- George H. Bainbridge, Guy Bartlett, Edna Becker, Dorothy Caldwell, Edna Dromms, Dan Fiscusi, Frank Freese, Edna Hallenbeck, Barrington S. Havens, Idella Heaox, Alice Holmes, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard J. Mattimore, B. D. Miller, P. Schuyler Miller, Mr. and Mrs. C. N. Moore, Harry Oleson, Stephanie Podrazik, Carl Remscheid, Daniel A. Ruddy, Vincent J. Schaefer, Dr. Minnie B. Scotland, Benton R. Seguin, Rudolph H. Stone, Nelle VanVorst, Mr. and Mrs. Jom H. Voght, and Esly Hallenbeck, Census Chairman, Schenectady Bird Club.

FEATHERS

The detailed report of the second Christmas Census of the Schenectady Bird Club, in the form required by Bird-Lore, is on page 1. Bird-Lore censuses are reported from all over the nation, so each must be brief and follow a set form. For the information of S B C members a more detailed account is in order.

Moderate weather greeted a very enthusiastic group of census-takers this year. Sunday, December 22, was the day. The temperature was 36°; the sky was overcast all day, with no wind; and a light rain fell during the afternoon. The fields and woods were mostly bare of snow. Watervliet Reservoir and the ponds and lakes were frozen over; the Mo-

hawk River was free of ice in large sections, and some fast-flowing streams were partly open.

The census this season showed a lack of owls -- not one was reported. There were unusually large numbers of tree sparrows, white- and red-breasted nuthatches reported. Practically all groups saw some bird which no other group saw; Group I, shrike and siakin; II, meadowlark and waxwing; IV, creeper; V, cowbird, red-shouldered and marsh hawks; VI, red-tailed hawk; VIII, robin; IX, rough-legged hawk.

The various groups were divided and the territory covered as follows:

Party I - Watervliet Reservoir,

Party	Total	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Number of Species	30	14	14	9	13	19	19	12	8	4
Number of Individuals	3501	913	222	62	202	807	445	668	153	29
American Merganser	27		5				13	9		
Red-tailed Hawk	1						1			
Red-shouldered Hawk	1					1				
Rough-legged Hawk	1									1
Marsh Hawk	2					2				
Sparrow Hawk	5		2			1	2			
Ruffed Grouse	5					1	2	2		
Ring-necked Pheasant	6		2				3	1		
Herring Gull	23		1				7	15		
Hairy Woodpecker	12	2		1	1	1	2		5	
Downy Woodpecker	36	19	1		4	3	8		1	
Blue Jay	148	8	10	2	23	14	16	15	60	
Crow	783	140	1	7	15	100	14	500	4	2
Black-capped Chickadee	266	70		22	52	31	54	35	2	
White-breasted Nuthatch	83	36	5	7	4	5	14	12		
Red-breasted Nuthatch	12	1		1	4	4	2			
Brown Creeper	1				1					
Robin	1									1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	19			4	6	2	6	1		
Cedar Waxwing	1		1							
Northern Shrike	1	1								
Starling	1250	510	100	6	50	407	60	26	75	16
English Sparrow	225	36	60		3	16	50	50		10
Meadowlark	1		1							
Cowbird	2					2				
Pine Siskin	15	15								
Goldfinch	84				7	67	5		5	
Slate-colored Junco	28	4		12		12				
Tree Sparrow	446	70	30		32	132	180	2		
Song Sparrow	16	1	3			6	6			

Carman, Guilderland; 8 hours, 9 miles afoot, 31 miles by car; Messrs. Moore, Bainbridge, Voght, and Hallenbeck.

Party II - Vly Road, off Troy Road, Vale Cemetery, Scotia (Collins Lake), River Road, General Electric Company; 6 hours, 5 miles afoot, 40 miles by car; Misses Caldwell, Holmes, Van Vorst, and Mrs. Moore.

Party III - Central Park and Parkview Cemetery; 5 hours, 5 miles afoot; Misses Becker, Dromma, Heacock, and Podrazik.

Party IV - Pine Barrens and Con-saul Road; 7 hours, 6 miles afoot, 5 miles by car; Messrs. Havens and P. S. Miller.

Party V - Meadowdale and Indian Ladder; 6 hours, 5 miles afoot, 30 miles by car; Messrs. B. D. Miller and Stone.

Party VI - Niskayuna and Saratoga side of Mohawk River; 9 hours, 8 miles afoot, 30 miles by car; Messrs. Bartlett and Seguin.

Party VII - Lock 8, Woestina Sanctuary, Schermerhorn Road, lower Rotterdam Hills; 5 hours, 5 miles afoot, 15 miles by car; Messrs. Freese, Oleson, Remscheid, Ruddy, Schaefer, and Fiscusi.

Party VIII - Fuller Road; 4 1/2 hours, 5 miles afoot, 10 miles by car; Dr. Scotland, Mr. and Mrs. Mattimore.

Party IX - Scotia and State St., Schenectady; 1 hour, 5 miles by automobile; Mrs. Hallenbeck and Mrs. Voght.

Your chairman wishes to thank all those who participated in the second Christmas Census, and hopes that this interest will grow so that more territory within the prescribed 15-mile circle can be covered another year.

WATER-HOLES

A Suggested Way of Seeing More Birds in Winter

P. Schuyler Miller

The season reminds me of something which I observed last winter, and which may (provided it isn't already a tried and proved trick) help some S B C members to keep up their winter averages.

On one of the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club's ski trips to the Pattersonville hills (Adebar or McKinney Hill, to be exact) a few die-hard non-skiers left the main group after lunch and did a little exploring of our own. It had snowed that morning, and the afternoon was cold, overcast and windy (with a blizzard in the offing), so we naturally gravitated to the sheltered ravine of the upper part of one of the creeks draining the area -- I think Terwilliger's Creek.

There were no birds to be seen in the open, and a few flocks of kinglets and chickadees in the tops of the evergreens along the ravine. However, as we followed the creek down, we came across a series of open "water holes" in the ice, close under the bank, where a spring or fast-flowing tributary had kept an area of one or two square feet from freezing. The fresh snow around these open holes was trampled for a distance of 10 or 15 feet by birds -- crows for the most part, but with a liberal sprinkling of smaller birds.

The chances are that the same thing happens whenever weather conditions drive winter birds to shelter, and wherever there are such water holes. We did not see the birds, but they had apparently been there during the morning. Perhaps we should adopt African big-game technique and stalk these water holes on winter days when birds seem to have evaporated elsewhere.

THE SEASON

Autumn, 1940

The latter part of September was quite seasonable. Early October was cool and then warmed to a glorious weekend for the Hawk Mountain trip on the 12th and 13th (FEATHERS 1940, p.54). Killing frosts on the 16th laid things low in gardens. After this, October weather was not bad. But November, with a new record of 25 cloudy days, freezing temperatures on 20 days, precipitation on 22 days, a near-record 9-inch snowfall, about three-quarters of the month colder than normal, and a record temperature of 8° on the 29th, was nothing to encourage the migrants to linger. Early December evidenced every intent of going November one better in the stretch to the winter solstice.

Whether or weather or not, it certainly seems as though the birds have an inside line on what is coming far in advance of anything our scientific weather prognosticators have to offer. As early as August 4th, and this is 5 days earlier than the earliest previous record at Mt. McGregor, there was a southward-bound warbler wave there, as reported by Miss Caldwell (1940, p. 41). At the same time the songs of four of the thrushes were heard.

Trips along the Hudson River, during the latter part of September, disclosed many egrets and several great blue herons wading around in the shallow waters on the east side of the Hudson.

An evening grosbeak discovered on the Saratoga Reservation by Miss Holmes the day after the New Deal Thanksgiving gives reason to wonder at the early date, a record for this section. Can it be that this bird is an advance scout? Will his report back result in an even greater grosbeak invasion than last season (1940, p. 21)?



FEATHERS

SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB

Annual Membership: Active, \$2; Assoc., \$1

Guy Bartlett, Editor, R.D.1, Rosendale Road

But the real migration treat of this autumn season, at least for those who saw them, was the mass flights of the Canada geese on November 23rd and 24th, both late dates for this section. Four members of S B C, hiking in the Middle Grove woods during the afternoon of the 23rd, wondered as to what farmer could be raising as many geese as the honk honks indicated. But an upward look disclosed V after V of Canada geese and shortly after more flocks for a total of well over 1,000 birds. On the same day several flocks, possibly some of the same birds, were also seen at Niskayuna and Guilderland Center. One of the flocks at Niskayuna had four main V formations, and well over 1,000 birds. There was a large flock over Scotia early in the morning of the 24th. On this same weekend, press reports from Montpelier, Vt., told about a large flock of Canada geese which were so disturbed by a passing airplane as to disrupt the flock. It appears that the main part of the flock went on with the leader, but the rest were confused and flew around until they became tired and landed to provide Thanksgiving dinners for many of the local people (Vermont's Thanksgiving was the last Thursday in November). Another press report told of similar airplane-geese trouble at Saratoga on the preceding day when a pilot dove through a flock of 1,000 over that city (He broke a federal law in doing so). These unusually large flights, for this section at least, give pause for thought. Are the Canada geese choosing a new flyway, or was this year's flight forced by unusual circumstances? At any rate, the Canada geese were honking Southward

Ho! Did they know of the fast following cold weather that was soon to seal the lakes and streams they were leaving behind? Remember November 29th established a record at 8 degrees.

A report of two green-winged teal shot on Saratoga Lake November 21st sets a late date (by 4 days) for this section. Among water birds arriving early were a few canvasbacks at Crescent on October 12th, an apparently new arrival date (reported to Bartlett).

A heavily fruited mountain ash tree in Sootia provided a flock of about 40 cedar waxwings with sustenance until the tree was stripped. These were reported by Esly Hallenbeck first on November 17th and from then on to December 6th when they apparently stripped the last berry. It is interesting to note that they started in the top of the tree and worked down. Also reported by Mr. Hallenbeck was the white-crowned sparrow in his yard on November 17th about two weeks later than previously recorded.

A large lone hawk, first reported by Mrs. Steele the latter part of October and not yet identified, has taken up a rodent vigil on Hog Island and in the vicinity of the Western Gateway Bridge. Whether or not this is the same hawk that spent so much time in this section last year will never be known.

Robins were reported singing in Vale Cemetery (VanVorst, Havens) as late as November 26th and at Niskayuna November 22nd. Although establishing no record date, a flock of pine siskins accompanied by goldfinches was recorded near Witches' Hole in the Helderbergs by four SBC members on November 30th. It will be recalled that pine siskins were reported on a local Christmas census the first time last year. They were also accompanied by goldfinches.

-- George E. Bainbridge

WALTER ELWOOD TO SPEAK IN JANUARY

Walter Elwood, First Vice President of the Sassafras Bird Club of Amsterdam, will be the speaker at the January meeting of the Schenectady Bird Club, at 8 o'clock Monday, January 27, in Room 311 of the Mt. Pleasant High School.

Last summer Mr. Elwood made a trip through the West, and had his motion-picture equipment with him. He obtained pictures of numerous city parks, national parks, wildlife refuges, conservation projects, and western flowers. He will illustrate his talk with these motion pictures.

TURALEE

"Turalee!" the wood thrush sings,
Through the silent trees it rings;
Bell-like, clear, his melody,
Happy, tinkling, fancy-free --
Bringing thoughts of other springs.

Thoughts of other years it brings;
Mem'ry leaps on eager wings,
While the wood thrush sings to me:
"Turalee!"

Hark, the crystal carollings,
Stirring hidden, harp-like strings,
Sound again o'er wood and lea;
Faintly, now more elfinly,
Back the hillside echo flings:
"Turalee!"

-- From the notebook of an S B C member.

DATES TO BEAR IN MIND

January 27 (Monday) - S B C meeting in Room 311, Mt. Pleasant High School; Walter Elwood, Amsterdam, the speaker.

February 24 (Monday) - Annual meeting, to include the election of four directors.

March 31 (Monday) - Regular S B C meeting. Speaker to be named later.


 NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF 

1940 Summary....

Featuring the next issue of FEATHERS will be the summary of 1940 bird records for Schenectady and vicinity. Those who have records to contribute to the article should supply them promptly to the records chairman, George H. Bainbridge.

G-E Mammals....

Last month the story of birds within the G-E was told. Mammals are also to be found within the gates. Deer have sometimes ventured in, usually to suffer fatal injury when frightened and trying to escape. Bats are often seen in action around the front gate and elsewhere. Slinky weasels, probably from the river flats, seek out prey on the property.

And an old story bears retelling of a G-E cat which brought each batch of her kittens, when about six weeks old, to a certain time-clock, so that they would be seen as the employees punched their clocks in the morning. The prettiness and playfulness of the kittens were so appealing that they were always taken to good homes, and this was evidently the end the clever mother had in view.

— Anna Dickerman

At Alco....

G-E is not the only large industrial plant in Schenectady with a bird population. At the American Locomotive plant a few winters back one of the buildings was a night haven for starlings by the hundreds. Records of the birds do not seem to be so readily available for the Alco plant, but indications are that a relatively large list could be produced.

More for the G-E....

In addition to the species listed as observed within the boundaries of the G-E plant last month, a flock of white-crowned sparrows was recorded a few years ago on the lawn and in the trees in front of Building 2. A few years ago, the roof of Building 8 was a perching, if not nesting, place for a night-hawk.

Cemetery Birds....

A more or less comprehensive report of the birds in Vale Cemetery is being made by B. S. Havens. For this reason he would appreciate contributions from others making observations in this territory (to be included in the record with due credit to the observer), involving any species whatsoever. For his records he would like to have the name of the observer, the date, weather conditions, species, number of individuals, and any other pertinent data, such as whether or not the bird was in song out of season.

Ice Houses....

One reason barn owls are extending their range into this general vicinity is a result of some of the manufacturing in Schenectady. Electric refrigeration led to the abandonment of ice houses along the Hudson below Albany. These unused ice-storage sheds are nesting sites for barn owls. Roger Tory Peterson said in his recent S B C talk.

Early Grosbeaks....

A male evening grosbeak was seen by three S B C members November 22 at the Saratoga Reservation. He was flying from tree to tree among

those surrounding the swimming pool and recreation buildings, and uttering loudly his single metallic note, as if in competition with the noisy, numerous blue jays.

Snowies to the West....

Reports have reached Schenectady that several snowy owls were shot in late December in the general territory between Amsterdam and Tribes Hill.

Okeechobee....

Again this year during February and March the National Audubon Society is conducting wildlife tours in the Okeechobee-Kissimmee Prairie region in Florida under the guidance of Alexander Sprunt, jr., supervisor of the Southern Sanctuaries, and Alden H. Hadley, educational representative.

Anyone interested in making the trip will find a wealth of material in Miss Dorothy Caldwell's articles which appeared in FEATHERS, 1940, pages 13, 26, and 30. Additional information can be secured from our secretary, Miss Nelle VanVorst, or by writing to the National Audubon Society, 1006 5th Ave., New York.

Audubon Membership....

There are a few details relating to S B C membership in the National Audubon Society which should be called to the attention of members. The literature on hawks and quails sent with two recent issues of FEATHERS was supplied by the association. There is an S B C subscription to Bird-Lore; the magazine can be made available to club members if they will contact C. N. Moore.

S B C members purchasing books, feeding stations, or other articles from the National Audubon Society receive a 10% discount. Our 1940 dues entitled us to the lecture in November by Roger Tory Peterson without fee beyond expenses. However, the by-laws have been changed so that the annual dues will be \$10

and arrangements for lecturers of the Audubon staff will be in no way related to the dues.

Poor Egret Showing....

Schenectady was not alone in having a poor showing of American egrets last summer. They were few, and late in arriving. Throughout Massachusetts, Ohio, and the rest of this state the flight was poor.

To Study Predation....

Valcour Island in Lake Champlain -- 1,000 acres a mile offshore south of Plattsburgh -- has been selected by the N. Y. State Conservation Department as an isolated site on which to study the effects of predation on game population. The investigation will be continued several years.

Duck Censuses....

Because migratory ducks, geese, and swans are grounded during January and February, these are the months of the annual waterfowl survey of the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey. The means of transportation used by its enumerators range from blimps and airplanes to automobiles and skis. Results serve as the basis for the year's hunting regulations.

Recent Bird Books....

"Audubon's America." By Donald Culross Peattie. 329 pp. \$6.00. Houghton Mifflin Co.

"Wings at My Window." By Ada Clapham Govan. 198 pp. \$2.50 The Macmillan Co.

"Canadian Water Birds. Game Birds. Birds of Prey. A Pocket Field Guide." By P. A. Taverner. 291 pp. \$2.50. David McKay Co.

"Wild Bird Neighbors." By Alvin M. Peterson. 283 pp. \$2.00. The Bruce Publishing Co.

"The Autobiography of an Egret." By Edward A. McIlhenney. 58 pp. \$2.00. Hastings House.

This & That

"Food Habits of a Group of Shore Birds: Woodcock, Snipe, Knot, and Dowitcher." 37 pages and 3 color plates, is newly available as Wildlife Research Bulletin 1 of the Bureau of Biological Survey, available from the Superintendent of Documents at Washington, at 25¢.

And, speaking of government publications, there are two that certainly should be obtained while still available. These are "The Migration of North American Birds" by Frederick C. Lincoln, available as Circular 363 of the Department of Agriculture at 10¢; and "Flight Speed of Birds" by May Thacher Cooke, as Circular 428 of the Department of Agriculture, at 5¢.

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The glaucous gull, red-throated loon, and Lapland longspur were among the November records at Rochester.

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The famous swallows of San Juan Capistrano, Calif., about which a song was written, are reported to keep their dates so closely that they shift a day in leap years. They broke a record of 73 years when they left prematurely on September 8, 1939; usually they leave October 23. Last year they left July 16. Possible conclusion: since attention has been focussed on the birds, more careful observations have been made of their dates. Were previous reports a little imaginative?

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Some items of major interest in 1940 were a Louisiana heron, dickcissel, lark sparrow, and clay-colored sparrow in Massachusetts; lark sparrow, yellow-headed blackbird, and Forster's tern in numbers in this state; and lark sparrows in Pennsylvania.

New England records for October included the Pacific loon, snow goose, Arkansas kingbird, gnatcatcher, and siskins and redpolls.

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November records for Buffalo included the whistling swan, golden plover, black-backed gull, siskin, and snow bunting.

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Massachusetts last year had breeding records of the little blue heron and yellow-crowned night heron. Bird-Lore reports. New Jersey had breeding snowy egrets. Also shown were breeding black-backed gulls in this state, double-crested cormorants in Massachusetts, and green-winged teal in Eastern Massachusetts.

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At a recent meeting, the National Association of Audubon Societies selected National Audubon Society as its new name.

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The Journal of Wildlife Management reports that experience in a marsh in Iowa proves that marshes are better for waterfowl and the like if small ponds are opened in the thick vegetation so that the birds have an opportunity to swim.

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Soon to be completed are two large dams at Lake Andes, S. D., to create a lake containing an island paradise for migratory wildfowl, pheasants, and other wildlife -- largest project of its kind in the United States.

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And in conclusion, don't fail to hand in your 1940 records promptly for inclusion in the summary.

FEATHERS

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VOL. 3 NO. 2

FEBRUARY, 1941

MASSACRED FOR MILLINERY

S B C Endorses National Audubon Society's Campaign to Stop Illegal Traffic in Plumage of Wild Birds

Hats again are adorned with feathers. Years back bird plumage was used regularly, and to such an extent many species were threatened with extermination. Federal laws stopped the traffic, and it seemed that, with the passage of time, the use of such adornments had been stamped out and forgotten.

Recently, however, feathers again appeared on hats. First they were from domestic poultry and legal game birds, such as pheasants. Now, it is shown by a recent investigation by Richard H. Pough of the National Audubon Society, birds of many kinds are being used. Among native species he lists the bald and golden eagles, whistling swan, osprey, and great blue heron. Included in importations have been the condor, European blue jay, jabiru, maribou, Japanese stork, steppe eagle, eight kinds of pheasants, lesser bird of paradise, great bustard, Indian kinghunter, red and blue macaws, common roller, crested screamer, common crane, oarceallie, ruddy shelldrake, European teal, whooping swan, rhea, European and Philippine pelicans, and the short-tailed, black-footed, and Laysan albatrosses. Eagle feathers, he reports, are sold o-

penly in millinery shops at a dime apiece.

Loopholes in the law have been found. One allows firms to dispose of feathers purchased prior to 1913, the second permits importation for making artificial flies. Importation of feathers for fly fishing spurred ahead three years ago when feathered hats came back into style, Mr. Pough reports, but no retail increase of fishing flies has matched the importations. Old invoices of imports -- more than 27 years old -- are still produced in court when feather merchandise is challenged.

Are birds to be threatened again with extermination because plumehunters have markets for their booty? A realization of the source of today's quills is sufficient to stop the sale of such hats to a large group, and a plugging of the loopholes in the laws will do even more.

At its January meeting the Schenectady Bird Club endorsed the campaign of the National Audubon Society to stop illegal traffic in bird plumage. Other local organizations are also expected to act soon.

A REVIEW OF S B C ACTIVITIES

In a way it hardly seems necessary to review the year's activities of the S B C, but on the other hand it may be of assistance if a brief review is presented, particularly since the information will be of assistance to those endeavoring to interest others in membership.

Throughout the year the Chairman of the Program Committee and the Chairman of Field Activities arrange many interesting programs and trips.

During the winter months a series of classes in bird study was conducted by B. S. Havens. These classes were held every two weeks and on Saturdays of the intervening weeks field trips were arranged with the idea of discovering birds discussed or studied the preceding week. The final class was held in Central Park in conjunction with the regular May meeting of the club. The meeting was preceded by a picnic supper, and took the form of a talk on bird songs by Mr. Havens.

The club meetings in the late spring and summer months were held outdoors with appropriate programs for each session. The weekend of June 8 we joined the Sassafras Bird Club of Amsterdam in a trip to Long Trail Lodge, Vermont, where we enjoyed several trips under the enthusiastic leadership of Maurice Bruhn, resident naturalist at the Lodge. A unique feature of the weekend was a visit to one of the largest nesting colonies of cliff swallows on record in that area.

The fall activities began with a trip to the Mt. Tom Reservation near Holyoke, Mass. From the tower on Goat's Peak several of the members observed the beginning of the fall hawk migration. This was but a foretaste of a more ambitious expedition later in the fall.

October was a most eventful month for Club members. Undoubtedly the outstanding event of the year was the rare opportunity of inspecting the original Audubon plates owned by Union College. Club members were afforded the privilege of seeing two of the four volumes of Audubon plates which were displayed by Helmer L. Webb, College Librarian, and his assistant. The members were so interested in the presentation that the whole evening was consumed in the display of but two volumes, so we were invited to visit the library again at some future time to see the remaining two volumes.

Another October treat was a trip to Hawk Mountain near Dreherstown, Pa., where we again spent a weekend under the leadership of Mr. Bruhn in observing another hawk migration.

As our membership in the National Audubon Society for the past year entitled us to a lecturer from its staff, we were favored with an illustrated lecture by Roger Tory Peterson, author of the most popular field book on birds. The lecture was open to the public at a nominal admission charge, but club members were provided with tickets at no charge.

The Club through special notices and items in FEATHERS has kept its members informed concerning events, lectures, etc., of special interest such as the John H. Storer motion pictures which were shown in Albany.

We hope that 1941 will be as rich in interesting activity as was 1940. If you have any items or suggestions to offer in the way of programs or trips, please contact the interested chairman.

-- Nelle VanVorst, Secretary

FEATHERS

SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB

Annual Membership: Active, \$2; Assoc., \$1

Guy Bartlett, Editor, R.D. 1, Rosendale Road

EARLY MIGRANTS

Believe it or not, it's about time to begin to look for the migrants. In fact, some may already have arrived.

It's not the robin, the blue-bird, grackle, song sparrow, or any of those others which different observers sometimes look for as the first migrants. It's generally the prairie horned lark which is first to come through. Despite snow-covered landscapes they arrive in numbers in early or mid-February, and are to be found feeding in fields or in and beside the roads. At a little distance they appear dull brown and relatively inconspicuous, but at close range have head markings of bright yellow, white and black, not to mention ear tufts. Northern horned larks, very much like the prairies, are also to be found. And sometimes Lapland longspurs and other unexpected species are found traveling with the cheerful larks.

Ducks are also early migrants, but their arrival dates depend to a great extent on the open water.

DUES ARE DUE

SBC is starting its third year, and dues are due. It hardly seems necessary to state again that the success of the club depends upon its membership, both financially and in its activities. The larger the membership, the more its activities. If each SBC member interests some person in membership, the success of the organization is assured.

TO ELECT OFFICERS

Four directors will be elected at the next meeting of SBC, to be held in Room 311, Mt. Pleasant High School, at 8 p.m. Monday, February 24. Offices to be filled include the chairmen of the program, finance, records, and junior activity committees, succeeding Miss Alice Holmes, Chester H. Moore, George H. Bainbridge, and Frank Freese, respectively. Election will be for two-year terms. Terms of four other directors expire next year.

Following the business meeting there will be a talk by an out-of-town speaker. Details concerning the talk will be included in a special notice preceding the meeting.

SBC TO PUBLISH RECORDS

Back in 1933 there was issued a small pamphlet, "Birds of Eastern New York," enumerating in a preliminary way the local records of various observers. In 1937 the booklet was reissued in more expanded form. Supplies of these preliminary booklets have been exhausted, and plans are now being made for a more complete publication, in more useful form. It is a project of the Records Committee, of which George H. Bainbridge is chairman.

It is felt that the information in the book should be limited to purely local records, since there are many books on field identification, general description, etc.

Now is the time to make suggestions concerning ways in which the new book can be made of most use to most members. If you have some suggestions, let the chairman have them. And if you have records additional to those already published or observations conflicting with published items, pass them in so that SBC's book can be all-inclusive.

MANY ARE BORN, BUT FEW SURVIVE

March, 1940, was torn from the calendar. Still no phoebes called in the early morning, sat on the wires beside the house, or fluttered above the windows. The previous half dozen years had always seen a pair of phoebes there, but it had already been decided that the story was ended, that the conclusion of a tragic story had been written. With early April a few pairs of phoebes did arrive in the neighborhood -- at the bridge up the road, across the highway and up the hill, and down the road at another bridge. But those birds did not make up for the pair now missing -- the pair which for so many years had been such a familiar sight.

Astronomical figures are used when one calculates the number of house flies that would result from one pair in just one or two years, if all offspring bred and produced normally. Similarly astronomical figures are required in considering fish such as the cod.

With birds the story is different. Some, including the ducks and gallinaceous birds, lay relatively many eggs but successfully rear few; others, like the extinct passenger pigeon, the almost extinct condor, and some others, lay one or perhaps two eggs; still others, like the song sparrow, may have a half dozen eggs and may nest two or three times a season. High mortality rates must be expected in some species, or they would soon blanket the territory.

In FEATHERS for November, 1939, for instance, it was stated that "from one pair of house wrens, two million birds could be produced in six years' time, if all the eggs hatched and all offspring bred and produced normally."

1934 and 1935 -- None

But to return to the phoebes. In 1934 a pair was first noticed at work on a nest on a shallow ledge over a second-story window of the

farmhouse. The occupants of the house knew that the mud going into the construction of the nest would not contribute to the appearance of the house, so the birds were not permitted to build.

Several times the phoebes tried to take possession of the ledge, and each time were foiled. They may have gone elsewhere to nest later, but any such nest was not discovered. In 1935 the story was the same.

1936 -- None

Before the birds came back in 1936 there was a change in ownership, and Man no longer interfered with the phoebes; in fact, attempts were made to assist them.

On May 1, 1936, there were three eggs in the nest on the window ledge. A week later the nest contained one addled egg, one young that had died very soon after hatching, and one lively offspring. Another week, and that one also had died in the nest.

A second nest was then built, on the opposite end of the same window ledge. The birds had difficulty in making the mud stick to the house, and at least two weeks were gone before they had finished construction. Hardly was it completed before there was a heavy rainstorm. Even though the ledge was protected by the overhang of the roof, the nest was downed by the storm. The

birds immediately rebuilt on the same site, and had the work done in record time. A few days later that nest was on the ground, with broken eggs in and beside it. There had been no strong wind, and the cause of the disaster was not apparent. The birds did not seem to try to nest again that season.

1937 -- None

On the theory that the nests fell because the ledge was so narrow -- not wider than $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches -- a shelf was fastened to the ledge during the next winter. In the spring of 1937 the phoebes immediately accepted the window ledge but, with the nest partially completed, English sparrows drove them off and brought in chicken feathers to turn the nest quickly into a mess of junk. The phoebes were unable to cope with the sparrows (which, however, quickly succumbed to lead poisoning, administered with a .22). The sparrow nest was removed, and the phoebes immediately started on the same site. The nest soon contained three eggs. On the following day it contained another and darker egg, despite the alertness of the phoebes. A cowbird which had so successfully parasitized several other nests in the vicinity that season had won again.

The young cowbird was found dead on the ground after a week; the young phoebes were never seen. Again that season the phoebes nested, using the same nest. It was not long before there were four dead young in the nest, and the cause was easily determined. The birds were infested with lice.

1938 -- None

In 1938 the birds were not successful in their attempt to use the ledge. Finally, after trying to place mud all along the sill, the birds abandoned the site and built on a wider ledge over the garage-shed door. The young were hardly a

week old when the story of the previous year was repeated. All the young died; the nest was swarming with lice.

The birds built again, this time successfully, on the usual window ledge. Again, however, the young died in the nest.

1939 -- None

In 1939 the phoebes had their usual poor luck in building over their favorite window. On the opposite side of the house, however, they did succeed in building on a similar ledge. The nest was nearly completed when it was noticed that only one of the pair was in evidence. Previously the male had roosted each night on wires close to the roof of the garage. Now the roost was not in use, and the bird was not helping with the nest. It probably had died.

The one bird completed the nest and on two successive days she laid eggs. The house was being painted, but the painter had been told to do nothing to that corner of the house. After the phoebe had flown close to him, atop the ladder, he was in favor of such a procedure.

On the third morning the story of this pair of phoebes was completed. On the ground below the nest on the window ledge was the remaining phoebe, dead, and with her wing and tail feathers heavy with paint. Investigation revealed that the bird had seen fit to alight on another, freshly painted, window ledge on another side of the house.

Perhaps the time will come when phoebes will again nest on ledges of the garage or house, but they will not be the same birds.

An account like this one is only one of many explanations of why birds do not increase to the extent that mathematical calculations indicate are possible. -- G. B.

**Winter Robin....**

Another wintering robin has been located. One showed up on the Christmas census; now another has been seen on Keyes Avenue. Nelle Van Vorst saw it January 12, at work on a mountain ash along with a starling. A little later in the day the robin had moved on, and in the tree were several starlings.

Another G-E Bird....

Still another bird has been added to the long list of those which have been recorded at General Electric. A couple of years ago a yellow-bellied sapsucker spent several days at the main gate, mostly at work on the yellow-wood tree in the trolley loop.

When Asleep....

How do birds sleep? Interesting observations on this phase of the activity, or inactivity, of birds is contained in an article in a recent issue of Science by Gustav Eokstein of the University of Cincinnati, reporting on the sleep of uncaged canaries in a large laboratory room.

Some slept night after night on the same spot; some moved from one place to another with changing seasons.

Some slept with either the right or left leg drawn up, usually the same one night after night, and with the bill and face tucked under the feathers at the top of the wing. On some winter nights he found all the birds in such a position. Again, the birds might sleep with the head not turned but merely hunched back. Occasionally birds were observed with their necks extended and their heads drooping so

that their bills rested on the perch or even hung below it -- this position being encountered more on hot nights. In still another way a sleeping bird would rest on its abdomen, and the breathing would heave the body.

Generally the birds slept with their eyes closed. Some were sound sleepers, others restless. Some might fall from their perches and remain where they fell. In general they slept with their backs to the morning light.

Christmas Censuses....

As we go to press Bird-Lore has not yet appeared with its summary of Christmas Censuses. However, a few reports have already been received locally.

Staten Island had 38 species, including Wilson's snipe, brant, red-throated loon, and Holboell's grebe.

Buffalo reported 50 species, and spoke of a decrease compared with other recent censuses. Included were the swan, 17 kinds of ducks, 4 species of hawks, 4 of gulls, red-headed woodpecker, only 125 crows, brown thrasher, and cardinal.

Rochester turned in a list of 48 species, including the red-bellied woodpecker and white-throated sparrow.

In the Auk....

The January issue of the Auk contains several items of local interest. Dr. Dayton Stoner of the N. Y. State Museum, Albany, and Mrs. Stoner have an article on "Feeding of Nestling Bank Swallows" in which they report on observations made near Albany in 1933.

Leonard J. Uttal of Albany, writing from Cornell University, re-

ports on an investigation he has made on "Tarsal Feathering of Ruffed Grouse."

At the A O U meeting in Boston, it is reported in the *Ank*, two papers were presented by Eugene P. Odum of the biological research division of the Edmund Huyak Preserve, Rensselaerville. One was on "Territory and Nesting of the Black-capped Chickadee" and the other on "Age and Seasonal Variations in the Physiology of Wild Chickadees."

Also in that issue was a report by Edward C. Raney of Cornell University on "Daily Movements of Young Black Duck," based on observations made at the Rensselaerville Preserve.

Jack Miner Fund . . .

Jack Miner's bird sanctuary, at Kingville, Ontario, is world famous. Much bird banding work has been done there, and the flocks of Canada geese that stop there have been noteworthy.

Jack Miner, now 75 years old, faces a financial crisis. Canada is at war, and the Dominion government has reduced by \$1500 the federal grant to his sanctuary. He is seeking funds to carry on, and says that no contribution is too small to be accepted and appreciated. It has been suggested by an S B C member that club members interested in making contributions do so as a group. Those desiring to contribute have been asked to forward their donations to the club treasurer.

Cowbird-raisers . . .

Appropos of the item about local cowbirds (1940, p. 8) it is interesting to note that in the vicinity of Buffalo at least 41 species of birds have been listed as parasitized. Included in the list: Kingbird, phoebe, least flycatcher, pewee, prairie horned lark, crow, white-breasted nuthatch, robin, wood, hermit, and olive-backed

thrushes; veery, bluebird, cedar waxwing; yellow-throated, red-eyed, warbling, and white-eyed vireos; golden-winged, yellow, cerulean, chestnut-sided, mourning, and hooded warblers, ovenbird, northern waterthrush, northern yellowthroat, and redstart; English sparrow, meadowlark, red-wing, Baltimore oriole, scarlet tanager, indigo bunting, purple finch, towhee; and vesper, chipping, field, swamp, and song sparrows.

All these are on the records of the Buffalo Ornithological Society. Who can add to the list of 13 recorded here? Incidentally, we have had the black and white warbler, Canada warbler, and goldfinch, not appearing on the Buffalo list.

Pheasants, Wanderers . . .

Young pheasants do not necessarily remain in the vicinity where they were liberated, announces the N. Y. State Conservation Department. Banded birds liberated in 1939 on an 1800-acre tract in Columbia County quickly dispersed. Within three weeks half the young pheasants were off the tract. Some birds were bagged during the hunting season up to six miles away. Four years ago a pheasant was released near Watkins Glen; in 1939 it was shot near Sherburne, 100 air-miles distant.

Wild pheasants generally live within a mile of where they were hatched, the department reports.

Gaspe, Popular . . .

The sea birds nesting on Perce Rock and Bonaventure Island off the Gaspé Coast, Canada, are known to some S B C members, and without doubt will be visited by others.

It is interesting to note that in 1939 approximately 21,500 persons visited the region, and more than 18,000 took motorboat trips to have close views of the thrilling spectacle provided by the large sea-bird population. In 1938 there were about 10,000 visitors.

Hudson Ducks . . .

Between Green Island and Stillwater on January 19 there was plenty of open water, and there were many flocks of American mergansers, black ducks, and American goldeneyes feeding or enjoying the sunshine along the icy banks. Driving from Stillwater to Saratoga via Stafford's Bridge with Misses Caldwell and Holmes, we found a very large flock of snow buntings. During the week many American mergansers were feeding in open water near Stafford's Bridge.

-- Nelle VanVorst

Geese, Pests There . . .

In this country it's a different story; on Tierra del Fuego, at the southern tip of South America, wild geese are considered pests. A hundred million is the estimated total of the two most common kinds. Argentine and Chilean ranchers are against the birds because they eat so much grass and badly foul the ground, so far as cattle are concerned.

This & That . . .

Want to see a song sparrow well in advance of the migration date? Some are wintering again in the cat-tails along the pond in Vale Cemetery.

-- N.V.V.

-o-

In connection with the report of the 1941 Christmas Census, published last month, the name of Mrs. H. Huthsteiner was inadvertently omitted from Group II participants.

-o-

Buffalo had records of at least 248 species and subspecies of birds during 1940. Both red and white-winged crossbills have been found there this winter, and either very late migration or else winter dates established for several species,

including the night heron, green-winged teal, killdeer, snipe, brown thrasher, bluebird, and field sparrow.

-o-

Figures just compiled by the New York State Conservation Department show that in 1938 the take of game in the state included 277,903 pheasants, 140,851 grouse, and 28,402 woodcock. More than 100,000 ducks and nearly 600 geese were also taken. There were approximately 550,000 hunting licenses in the state that year, not to mention farmers not requiring hunting permits.

-o-

Atwater's prairie chicken, at home on the prairies of western Louisiana and Texas, will soon become extinct unless adequate measures to protect it are taken soon, the Texas Wildlife Institute reports. Hunting and cultivation are held responsible.

-o-

Ross's goose, a small, western species, was one of the few remaining North American birds whose nest had not been found. The nesting site has now been located, near the mouth of the Perry River, southeast of Victoria Island of northern Canada.

-o-

There are many locations convenient to Schenectady that have much to offer to bird students. Some are well known to most SBC members; others are practically unknown.

The state conservation department game farm at Delmar is a famous place. Much research work concerning birds is being done there.

Watch for the announcement by the Field Activities chairman a little later about a Club visit to Delmar. And watch also for a special announcement of the Program chairman very soon about a chance to learn about the work there.

FEATHERS

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MARCH, 1941

ALLAN D. CRUICKSHANK TO SPEAK AT MARCH MEETING

**"Wild Life through the Lens" Subject of Illustrated Talk by One of Today's
Foremost Bird Photographers -- Meeting Scheduled March 31 at
Nott Terrace High School -- Tickets Now Available**

"Wild Life through the Lens" will be the subject of an illustrated lecture by Allan D. Cruickshank of the National Audubon Society at the March meeting of the Schenectady Bird Club. The meeting will be held Monday night, March 31, at 8 o'clock in the Nott Terrace High School Auditorium. S B C members should present their membership cards at the door; additional tickets (30 cents each) may be purchased at the door or, better yet, in advance from the committee.

Mr. Cruickshank is considered one of the best wildlife photographers in the country. His work has appeared in the leading papers, in Bird-Lore (now Audubon Magazine), National Geographic Magazine, Nature Magazine, Natural History, and many others. Several of his photographs have been selected by American Camera to be included in the book "The Best Photographs of 1940." His photographic expeditions have taken him to the Gaspé Peninsula, the New England coast, Long Island, New Jersey, Virginia, the Carolinas, Florida, Texas, Louisiana, and many other parts of the United States and Mexico.

To several S B C members he is best known as the head bird instructor at the Audubon Nature Camp in Muscongus Bay, Maine, where he has spent his summers since the camp was established in 1936.

In his talk here Mr. Cruickshank will use both colored slides and motion pictures. He is a speaker of experience, and his high standing as an ornithologist is indica-

ted by his recent election to the presidency of the Linnaean Society of New York.

Mr. Cruickshank, one of the most active field observers in the New York region, was born in the Virgin Islands in 1907. After graduation from Evander Childs High School, New York, where he was president of the Naturalists' Club two years, he attended New York University, being graduated in 1931. At college he specialized in biology and public speaking. He was vice-president of the sophomore class, president of the junior class, and in his senior year president of the entire student body. A member of the track team four years, at graduation he was voted by his fellow students the best all-around student and the

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most popular and most respected student.

For eight summers he was in charge of nature work at Camp Menotomy, Kent Hills, Maine, and since leaving college has continued field work, lecturing both to groups and on the radio, and has been employed at the American Museum of Natural History.

Mr. Cruickshank is not only one of the most expert bird photographers of today, but he also has a most unusual ability to imitate bird calls.

During the winter months, in addition to lecturing as a staff member of the National Audubon Society he is developing a program of nature study in the schools of Long Island, under the auspices of the Bird Club of Long Island.

Information concerning tickets may be obtained from the ticket committee; Mrs. Elsy Hallenbeck, phone 6-8579; Miss I. M. Heacox, phone 4-5878; Miss Nelle VanVorst, phone 6-5083; or the chairman, phone 4-2763. Miss Alice Holmes and Mrs. R. S. Neblett have actively assisted in arranging the meeting. It is expected that Mr. Cruickshank will be the guest of S B C at dinner before the lecture;

those desiring to attend the dinner should telephone the chairman.

-- Alice Moore, Chairman
Program Committee
* * *

Are the members of the Schenectady Bird Club, their friends, and Schenectadians in general interested in having such outstanding speakers as Messrs. Sprunt, Peterson, and Cruickshank, each of whom has an entertaining as well as instructive talk?

The S B C is a young organization, making its way without endowment, reserve fund, or large dues. Its program of activities must be in line with its income. This is the time for an active drive for additional members, and admission to the lectures is included in membership dues. This fact, together with the awakening, or reawakening, interest in birds with the approach of spring emphasizes the fact that each S B C member should endeavor to interest others in membership, or at least in attending the lecture by Mr. Cruickshank.

The March meeting can be made a success only by the concerted help of all members. Let's endeavor to have a record turn-out at the meeting.
-- G. B.

FOUR NEW DIRECTORS NAMED

At the annual meeting of S B C in February four new directors were elected in accordance with the club constitution. Mrs. Chester N. Moore succeeded Miss Alice Holmes as chairman of the program committee; Mrs. H. Huthsteiner replaced Chester N. Moore as treasurer; Dr. R. H. Harrington took over the junior activities work of Frank Freese; and B. D. Miller was named on the records committee, succeeding George H. Bainbridge.

Four other directors -- Miss Nelle VanVorst, secretary; W. R. Steele, conservation; Barrington S. Havens, field activities; and Guy Bartlett, publications -- continue in office another year.

In accordance with the constitution, dues for 1941 should be paid now to the treasurer. Checks may be mailed to Mrs. Huthsteiner at 1706 Lenox Road or, if preferred, given to her at the next meeting.

DATES TO BEAR IN MIND

Monday, March 31 -- Nott Terrace High School Auditorium; 8 p. m.; illustrated lecture on "Wild Life through the Lens" by Allan D. Cruickshank. No admission charge for members; tickets 30 cents each.

Saturday, April 5 -- Early morning field trip, Schermerhorn Road section; B. S. Havens, leader.

Sunday, April 20 -- Migrant waterbird field trip, Crescent Lake section; leader to be announced.

Saturday, April 26 -- Central Park field trip for migrants.

Monday, April 28 -- Regular S B C meeting, 8 p.m., Room 311, Mt. Pleasant High School.

On How to Bind FEATHERS

As an aid to those who wish to bind their issues of FEATHERS in standard loose-leaf notebooks, an innovation is introduced with this issue. As will be noticed, three wire stitches are being employed. These are so "registered" that they are immediately in back of the punched holes for standard three-ring binders. The stitches add reinforcement, so that it is possible to punch the holes close to the edge. Those who had been using such binders previously found that the holes needed to be punched too close to the text in order to have sufficient strength in the binding.

Incidentally, local book and stationery counters have a variety of appropriate covers, with space for two or three years of FEATHERS.

Those having issues that they wish to have "stitched" for binding should return their copies to the publications chairman.

By the way, if you are endeavoring to keep a complete file of FEATHERS but have lost certain copies, it would be well to obtain the missing copies soon. Some of the issues are nearly depleted.


FEATHERS
SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB
Annual Membership: Active, \$2; Assoc., \$1
Guy Bartlett, Editor, R.D.1, Rosendale Road

Feather Campaign a Success

After months of vigorous campaigning, a victory has been won by the National Audubon Society in its campaign against the use of the plumage of wild birds, which campaign was endorsed by the Schenectady Bird Club (FEATHERS, February, page 9). Carl W. Buchheister, assistant director of the national organization, has written to thank S B C for its action, and to report on the success of its campaign in this state.

The report is too comprehensive for publication in our pages, but can be obtained from the secretary. Briefly, in early February a joint declaration of policy and program was signed by the National Audubon Society and Feather Industries of America, Inc., calling for immediate stoppage of traffic in the plumage of the bald and golden eagles, egret, bird of paradise, and heron; certified inventories of all wild bird plumages now owned or possessed; no additions to inventories; and disposal or forfeiture of all remaining wild bird plumage within six years.

Legislation backing this policy is being sponsored in the New York State Senate by Senator Thomas C. Desmond of Newburgh, a director of the National Audubon Society and a member of the executive committee of the board which signed the declaration of policy for the association. At least 90 per cent of the feather industry centers in this state; similar legislation will also be sought in all of the other states.

RANDOM NOTES ON RECENT TRIPS

Barrington S. Havens

The Song of the Creeper

It was a mid-February morning -- clear, frosty, without wind, with the thermometer around 25. Spring was just around the corner, and the effects of the lengthening days were beginning to be felt.

I was on my way through the Vale Cemetery to work, checking up as usual on the birds there. It was just 7 o'clock when I arrived at the head of a little ravine about midway along my route.

Stopping to listen to two white-breasted nuthatches, my attention was suddenly diverted to another bird note. It was the "scree-eeep" note of the brown creeper, two of which had been recorded off and on in that locality throughout the winter. It quickly became evident that there were at least two active now, and an attempt was made to find them and determine just how many were there.

Then the creeper sang. True, it was not the full, ringing song of the species, surprisingly loud for such a small bird, which is heard on such rare occasions during the warm months, but the notes were the same. He didn't throw his head back during the performance, thus adding evidence it was not a true song, but -- freak or not -- it was a song of sorts, and the song of the creeper.

He sang several times while I stood there watching and listening. He also uttered his usual weak chickadee-like notes, together with another oddity; a note somewhat resembling that of the golden-crowned kinglet in winter. The other bird could be heard, meanwhile, somewhere nearby, uttering the usual creeper note of winter -- the one which sounds like that of a chickadee.

For any bird to sing during the winter months is in itself worthy of note, but for a bird like the creeper, whose song is so seldom heard anyway, to perform in this manner must be of phenomenal rarity. The sun was not yet in evidence, so the concert cannot be ascribed to its warming influence.

* * *

Birds That Stay Put

Some birds seem to lead a vagabond or nomadic life, wandering about a great deal, while others must have much more sedentary dispositions for they seem to prefer staying in the same place. One of the by-products of the current study of bird life in Vale Cemetery has been some interesting observations on birds of the latter type.

For certain species, at least in winter, can be relied on to stay put for indefinite periods. The downy and hairy woodpeckers, white-breasted nuthatches, brown creeper, and song sparrow were regularly observed at the same spots, day after day, throughout the winter of 1940-1941. The only variation seemed to be that caused by the movement of the birds throughout the day on their regular feeding cycles. At a given time of day (sun time, of course) they nearly always would be found, however, at the same spots.

Other observations tend to confirm this. Wintering ducks and gulls are usually found at the same place except when the water freezes up and drives them to more favorable locations. The same is true of the kingfisher. Owls and some hawks, once located, can nearly always be found at the same spot again. Winter observations of the winter wren, robin, mockingbird, kinglet, chickadee, pine and evening grosbeaks, junco, tree sparrow, and song sparrow add further evidence. Of course, in many cases

the diminishing or disappearance of the food supply will drive the bird away to better feeding grounds; e. g., wintering robins and grosbeaks.

* * *

Winter Wanderers

Periodic movements of various species of birds are not the orderly activities that a first-glance study of migration would lead us to believe. The more one investigates by personal research and specialized reading, the more one is convinced that the subject is an exceedingly complex one.

Take, for example, starlings. In the study which is now being made of the species in Vale Cemetery, a low point in bird population was found to occur in this past winter season at about mid-January. At this time the number of starlings dropped down to but a few individuals, and it took careful search to find these.

But the days, meanwhile, were lengthening, and within a month the starling population showed a decided increase. By mid-February it was a not uncommon sight to see five or six starlings on a single tree, and on one day 35 were recorded.

Confirmatory evidence of such wanderings is found in the study made a year or so ago of starlings and English sparrows observed on the city streets on the way to work at the General Electric plant in the morning. In that instance, also, starlings were found to drop off considerably in numbers in mid-winter.

Evidently what happens is that the birds leave the city to join with others outside the city in large flocks. Any local bird observer is familiar with the flocks of starlings which can be seen outside the city during the winter months -- often with other species,

such as meadowlarks or cowbirds, feeding with them. Probably, when the lengthening day stimulates the migrating instinct, the birds break up the flocks and go to other locations -- possibly stations where they spent the preceding summer.

Additional evidence that this may be so seems available. On February 22 one starling was seen entering and leaving a hole in one of the trees in Vale Cemetery. It is not suggested that the mating season had started yet, but possibly the first blossoming of the migrating instinct, causing the birds to return to their cemetery haunts, is accompanied by a revival of the preliminary nesting instincts.

Other species do not seem to wander at all in the winter. The white-breasted nuthatches, downy and hairy woodpeckers, and English sparrows continued to be found in the cemetery in just about the same numbers throughout the winter. Two or three brown creepers stayed there regularly all winter long, although these birds were undoubtedly winter residents only, while nuthatches, woodpeckers, and sparrows are probably year-round birds.

Another wandering species, however, is the goldfinch. These birds practically disappeared from the cemetery by the end of 1940, one being seen at two widely separated occasions during December. No more individuals were recorded again, despite careful search, until January 29, when six were logged. The birds were then recorded practically every day, and it speedily developed that quite a large flock had made the cemetery its home, feeding on the buds of birches. There were at least 30 birds in the flock, and they were recorded regularly until the time of writing.

Probably the goldfinch flock will move out again at the beginning of spring to go north or elsewhere to their breeding place.



Singing Females....

B. D. Miller recently had a question about bird song that must have bothered other SBC members, so the answer of Professor Arthur A. Allen of Cornell University should be of interest:

"With a majority of species it is the males only that indulge in true song. In the case of some cardinals, purple finches, and possibly rose-breasted grosbeaks, however, the females are known to sing a similar but weaker song, and in certain tropical wrens the males and females sing duets together, the voice of one being approximately an octave above that of the other. The same is apparently true of the chachalacas, where both males and females call.

"Female birds do, however, have quite a variety of call-notes, and in the case of the red-winged blackbird one of these, which is a rather varied jumble of notes, might be considered as a song.

"In the case of waterfowl, the syrinx, or voice-box, of the drake is greatly enlarged and highly specialized, while that of the female has normal structure. In ordinary birds, however, there seems to be little visible difference in the structure of the syringes of the two sexes."

Air-raided....

In a recent article in Science there is an interesting account from the department of zoology at the University of Edinburgh concerning animal behavior during air-raids. Speaking of birds:

"During a recent air-raid on the east coast of Scotland a flock of black-headed gulls displayed something akin to mass hysteria when a nearby anti-aircraft battery suddenly opened fire in the early

hours of the morning. With one accord the whole colony of several hundred rose into the air in a flurry of startled cries and flapping wings. For nearly an hour afterwards they circled round and round before once more resuming their habitual position on the field that they have made their winter quarters. The smaller wild birds contented themselves in uttering subdued twitterings from their perches in the trees and hedgerows. On the other hand, an owl which had taken up residence in the locality behaved in a manner more akin to the attitude of defiance shown by the London donkey (A donkey reacted defiantly and replied to the noises of the bombs by an angry braying of its own). This birds, probably a tawny owl, gave

an angry braying of its own). This bird, probably a tawny owl, gave vent of its feelings during some unusually intense gunfire by a paroxysm of indignant screeches of a most belligerent tenor. He left no doubt that he resented this unseemly incursion upon the progress of his night-work."

Observations abroad indicate some species show alarm, some are indifferent, and some show defiance.

Native Bob-white?....

David Cook of the New York State Conservation Department, who so interestingly explained the work of the Delmar station in particular and the state's conservation work in general had an interesting comment about the bob-white that was new to at least most of his audience at the February meeting.

In speaking of the difficulty of reintroducing the bob-white into the up-state region (Schenectady county has been officially abandoned as a section for liberation

of stock) he said it is probable that the bob-white was not originally a bird of this region -- back in the days of the Indians. Only when settlers opened up the territory did the birds spread northward -- and that probably explains why the rigors of winter have so often been disastrous to the stock.

In Other Sections....

Among January high-lights at Buffalo, The Prothonotary reports, were 50 species on New Year's Day. During the month there were records there of the great blue heron, swan and Canada goose, at least 18 kinds of ducks, snipe, pectoral sandpiper, red-bellied and red-headed woodpeckers, robin, both kinglets, meadowlark, redwing, cowbird, cardinal, white-winged crossbill, and vesper sparrow. The total species for January there was 76.

Winter records at Rochester have included the ruddy duck, white-winged crossbill, swamp sparrow, red-throated loon, Holboell's and horned grebes, and white-throated sparrow. The total species for 1940 at Rochester was 232.

Christmas Censuses....

A glance through the 76 pages of the Audubon Magazine's Christmas Census supplement shows many interesting items. The highest number of species and subspecies was reported by the group at Harlingen, Texas, with a list of 132. Eleven other places had more than 100 each, including Cape May, N.J., with 109, and Western Long Island with 106.

In this state there were 24 censuses. The counts were; Bayville, L.I., 55 species, 41,243 individuals; Easthampton, L. I., 75 and 10,201; Mastic, L.I., 29 and 2629; Montauk, L.I., 60 and 18,462; Orient, L.I., 50 and 7,376; Smithtown, L.I., 63 and 5,108; Southern Nassau County, L. I., 70 and 18,753; Western Long Island, 106 and 46,000; Westhampton, L. I., 70 and 5,569; Bronx - Westchester, 88 and 18,100; Buffalo, 50 and 13,285; Cortland,

35 and 5,039; Fort Plain, 18 and 132; Geneva, 34 and 5,490; Ithaca, 25 and 1,780; Kerhonkson, 16 and 163; Mt. Hope, 14 and 182; Fort Chester, 62 and 5,134; Rochester, 48 and 5,935; Schenectady, 30 and 3,504; Staten Island, 38 and 2,702; Syracuse, 21 and 1,010; Waddington, 21 and 1,189; and Watertown, 13 and 196.

Also of local interest were the records of Bennington, Vt., 19 and 787; Timmouh, Vt., 12 and 84; Great Barrington, Mass., 17 and 135; Holyoke, Mass., 28 and 1,042; Northampton, Mass., 42 and 3,235; and the junction of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, 21 and 713.

Incidentally, Schenectady alone of all the up-state New York regions had the red-shouldered hawk, meadowlark, cowbird, and siskin.

This & That

Another year the bald eagle has accepted the upper Hudson as his feeding grounds. On February 12, three S B C members drove along the Hudson, watching the many ducks feeding and riding swiftly down the river. Almost to Mechanicsville they found the prize of the day -- the eagle.

Ducks locally observed an early spring. Several flocks of them were noted on the Mohawk at Alplaus in late February. Kiah Maynard first reported them there Feb. 25.

A flock of about fifteen pine grosbeaks were being seen daily in mid-February, feeding near the buildings on Mt. McGregor.

In the cemetery at Glens Falls there was a flock of about twenty American, or red, crossbills in late February.

April 14 starts Wildlife Restoration Week, sponsored by national

and state wildlife federations.

April 20 starts "Be Kind to Animals Week."

It used to be Bird-Lore, published by the National Association of Audubon Societies. Now it is Audubon Magazine, published by National Audubon Society. Only in the name, however, has the magazine been changed; it was felt that the former name did not properly indicate the nature of the publication.

There's probably more than one S B C member who has regularly recorded the whip-poor-will without ever having actually seen one. And to a lesser extent, the same is probably true of the woodcock.

They are both more easily heard during the night than seen during the day.

White-winged crossbills have been reported much more commonly than usual throughout northeastern states this winter.

A mockingbird appeared in Pittsfield in mid-November and was seen regularly through the winter.

Should local bird observers make a check-up on the rock dove? It is of course known that many of the pigeons regularly seen on field trips are not really barnyard birds but feral birds. It is noticed that most Christmas Census reports include the rock dove, but in this vicinity no attempt has ever been made to locate true feral doves.

Did you ever notice birds flying along the highway, parallel with your car? The next time it happens, take a look at your speedometer, if you have been maintaining a uniform speed and if the bird has paralleled your car a sufficient

distance. Some interesting observations can be made this way.

Roosting starlings and English sparrows are a problem confronting building superintendents in many cities, particularly in the winter. Pigeons, of course, add to the problem.

A bird-repeller has now been introduced commercially. It is an aluminum beading with needle-pointed spines of fine gauge stainless steel wire. Like thorns on a bush, the spines serve as a warning and, it is claimed, the birds swerve away. The repeller is easily attached on ledges, architraves, and other locations where birds are in the habit of roosting.

When Berries Are Common . . .

Mountain ash berries afford fine winter food for many birds so it is always worthwhile watching all such trees. And a winter asparagus bed, with its many red berries, is also an ideal feeding spot for many species.

It is for this reason that the open fields at the corner of St. David's Lane and Consal Road is particularly attractive in the winter. The mountain ash trees are numerous, and heavy with berries. And right beside them is an asparagus bed, also heavy with berries.

No wonder, then, that a flock of at least 150 cedar waxwings decided to spend at least a large part of the winter there, much of the time high in the branches of an elm, much of the time in the orchard and in the mountain ash trees, and, when the snow was not too deep, in the asparagus bed.

The birds were recorded there on Lincoln's birthday, and regularly since then into March.

Incidentally, while cedar waxwings more or less regularly winter locally, they are usually in small flocks. It takes a good concentration of food to support a flock as large as the one along the Lane.

FEATHERS

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SOME STUDIES OF WINTER BIRD POPULATIONS

Interesting Facts Are Revealed by Banded Chickadees at Feeding Stations,
And Some Likewise Interesting Questions Are Raised

Dorothy Caldwell

Bird banding at a winter feeding station gives an unusual opportunity for population studies. During the past ten winters I have been feeding birds at my window sill, but not until December, 1937, did I attempt banding them.

My first trapping device was crude and unsatisfactory, and I banded only an occasional chickadee and white-breasted nuthatch. By late January, 1938, suitable automatic traps were installed, and never while memory lasts will I forget the thrill of the first afternoon of successful banding. I banded 15 birds -- one downy woodpecker, one white-breasted nuthatch, three red-breasted nuthatches, and ten chickadees -- almost as fast as I could reset the traps and record the bandings.

By the end of February, 1938, I had banded 44 chickadees and had retrapped most of the December and January birds. In early March I caught five more, making 49 black-capped chickadees banded at one window sill in three months. Possibly an earlier start would have

given a still greater total, but it was a surprise to know that fifty or more chickadees had been feeding at one window during the season. I had supposed that 10 or 20 individuals comprised our winter chickadee population and that these birds, in small groups, lunched about at the various local feeding stations.

It was a surprise also to find that only a few of our Mt. McGregor chickadees were visiting my station and that my banded birds were not making the rounds of all the other food trays. Our buildings are grouped about a small lake. The laboratory is a few hundred feet southwest of the lake, and that season there were several other feeding stations nearby along the west side, one at the north end, and three on the east side of the lake. There were at least eight feeding stations available, and none of them more than a quarter of a mile from my laboratory banding station. My banded birds were seen regularly at the west-side stations and at the north-end station, and I sometimes saw them on the trails to the west; but they

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were never seen at any time during that season at any of the three east-side feeding stations though friends and I watched carefully. This is in accordance with Dr. Butt's findings that chickadee flocks have definite, restricted feeding territories.

It seems reasonable that the chickadees from quite a length of the ridge might concentrate about the sanatorium buildings in winter and then scatter through the woods at nesting time, for we have comparatively few chickadees about the grounds in summer and they are relatively abundant through the cold weather. But there was an abundance of unbanded chickadees on the trails a mile or more from the sanatorium all winter. My 49 chickadees alone would have needed an appreciable number of acres for nesting territory — but we must have had more than 100 chickadees that winter within a radius of a mile. Where did they all come from and where did they go in the spring?

There was a marked concentration of chickadees through January and February and a sharp decline in numbers after March 3 with the onset of milder weather. Yet Mr. Bowdish reported that at Demarest, N. J., he had an increase in chickadee population during March, 1938. He had 27 birds rather regularly up to early March when all but eight of these left his station and were replaced by 16 new chickadees banded during March. Mr. Whittle at Peterboro, N. H., on the other hand reported about 70 banded chickadees from November, 1937, through January, 1938, but that "from late January there was a gradual falling off in the number of birds at the station and the shrinkage was very marked by February 4, estimated at 75 per cent. By late February practically all had ceased to visit the station." Why did the majority of Mr. Whittle's New Hampshire chickadees desert him at the end of January; and mine continue through

February; and Mr. Bowdish, 200 miles farther south, have new chickadees coming to him in March? My records suggest that I had in February, 1938, an increase of new chickadees comparable to Mr. Bowdish's March experience, but my data through December and January are inadequate for the definite demonstration of this.

During the season of 1938-1939 I banded only 19 new chickadees. Only three of these were banded in February, so I did not have an increase of chickadees in February, 1939. There were six chickadee returns from the previous season. One of these was my first banded chickadee, which with his banded mate apparently nested near the laboratory in 1938. Their progeny were banded in September but only one of these stayed with me through the following winter together with one of the parent birds. The other parent was not retrapped after November, 1938.

All of my returns, except the nesting pair, came back to me during the first cold days in November and stayed about the laboratory for the duration of the winter. I rather hoped that some of the winter storms and sub-zero weather might send more of my first year's chickadees back to the feeding station but this did not occur, and six returns in November, 1938, out of 49 chickadees banded the winter before was my record for the season.

The Two Most Recent Years

During four winter seasons a total of 180 birds has been banded at the window-sill feeding station, including 119 chickadees, 21 red-breasted and 18 white-breasted nuthatches, 15 downy and seven hairy woodpeckers.

The summary of birds banded is as follows:

1937-1938 49 chickadees, 12

red-breasted and 8 white-breasted nuthatches, four downy and two hairy woodpeckers, making a total of 75 banded birds fed.

1938-1939 19 chickadees, three white-breasted nuthatches, and three downy woodpeckers, making a total of 25 birds banded. To these should be added six returned chickadees of the previous year, three white-breasted nuthatches, and one hairy woodpecker, making 35 banded birds fed.

1939-1940 37 chickadees, six red-breasted and five white-breasted nuthatches, six downy and four hairy woodpeckers, making a total of 58 birds banded. To these should be added six returned chickadees (including two of the first year), three white-breasted nuthatches, one downy and two hairy woodpeckers, making a total of 70 banded birds fed.

1940-1941 (To March 15) Fourteen chickadees, three red-breasted and two white-breasted nuthatches, two downy and one hairy woodpeckers, making a total of 22 birds banded. One chickadee of the first winter was still at the feeding station in September, 1940, and during the winter seven other previously banded chickadees returned, plus four white-breasted nuthatches and two downy and one hairy woodpeckers, making a total of 37 banded birds fed.

Each bird when it is first trapped is, of course, given one of the numbered aluminum bands provided by the Biological Survey, and this number is read and recorded whenever the bird is retrapped. As frequent trapping is neither desirable nor feasible, the use of colored bands is helpful for sight identification. In these studies bands of blue, green, black, or red are used. As comparatively few nuthatches and woodpeckers are banded, each of these birds is gi-

ven a colored band as well as a numbered band the first time it is trapped, and the color and the location (right or left leg) of both bands recorded. Since the majority of the birds handled are chickadees the use of colored bands for them has been limited to chickadees nesting near the laboratory and to those that return for more than two seasons. For instance, the chickadee with an aluminum band on the right leg and a black band on the left leg is # 38-32919, was banded November 17, 1938, has been retaken several times, and has been seen frequently through the seasons of 1939 - 1940 and 1940 - 1941. The chickadee with the numbered aluminum band on the left leg and a blue band on the right leg is #38-11450, banded December 11, 1937, the first bird I ever banded, nested nearby the summer of 1938, visited the feeder regularly during the winters of 1938-1939 and 1939-1940, nested nearby again in the summer of 1940.

Birds so banded are easily recognized at sight without the necessity of retrapping them. Incidentally, although the 1937 - 1938 chickadees fed on the west and north sides of the lake during that season, some of the banded birds in subsequent seasons modified their range to include at least one east-side station. The blue-banded chickadee just mentioned is one of these. It deserted the laboratory feeder early in the winter and Suve Narita has reported it as a regular visitor at the Grant Cottage feeding station ever since.

The chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, hairy and downy woodpeckers are permanent residents, and a small percentage of the banded birds of each of these species has returned the following winter. The red-breasted nuthatch occurs here rather sporadically as winter visitor, occasional migrant, and, rarely, as summer resident. Red-breasted nuthatches have, however,



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Guy Bartlett, Editor, R.D.1, Rosendale Road

appeared almost daily through three of the four winters of this study and 18 have been banded in previous seasons. So far, no banded red-breasted nuthatch has come back the following season, though other operators report winter returns of these birds.

During the second banding season the banded chickadees of the year before were all trapped in November. The following season, 1939-1940, there were no chickadee returns until December and January, and two came back in March. During the present season, 1940-1941, return chickadees were recorded from November through February. There seems to be no ready explanation for the fluctuations, nor for the extreme variation in the total numbers of birds at the feeding station from season to season. Doubtless many factors are involved.

Mere data such as these give little indication of the joy and satisfaction the constant association with these birds has given. It has been good to really know that the same birds were coming day after day, and some of them returning year after year.

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Bowditch, B. S. Chickadee movements at Demarest, N. J. *Ibid.*, 9, 1938, 159.

Whittle, Charles L. Are Peterboro, N. H., wintering chickadees to any extent migrating birds? *Ibid.*, 9, 1938, 202.

THE SEASON -- 1940 in Review

To those interested in birds the often severe and unusual weather conditions of 1940 may well account for some of the extraordinary bird visitations experienced not only in our own particular section but in some cases more or less generally throughout northeastern New York.

The great influx and wide distribution of pine and evening grosbeaks was probably the most striking of the year's bird phenomena, as commented on at length by Dr. Dayton Stoner in the July, 1940, *Auk*. In the immediate vicinity the pine grosbeak established an early arrival date of November 26, 1939, and the evening grosbeak a late departure date of May 14, 1940, which may well be long standing. The 1940-1941 winter found both species apparently missing locally.

A late snowfall of about five inches on April 12 with temperature well below freezing drove many birds to the feeders, including a very much disgusted and almost completely dejected robin. This bird after vainly seeking for worms alongside building walls finally essayed a feeder. His dejection was then complete at the sight of nothing but sunflower seeds which were as rocks to his appetite.

The common loon, which is not so common or plentiful around here, was on Saratoga Lake last spring in larger numbers than usual. 1940 records also included the red-throated loon at Duane Lake June 14; subsequent trips failed to reveal them there.

While on the topic of water birds, it appears from the records and observations of several that there were more ducks than usual in local waters during the 1940 breeding season, including black ducks, mallards, blue-winged teal, and wood ducks. One brood of twelve

apparently motherless ducks, probably mallards and unable to fly, were photographed several times with motion picture cameras, once in particular after they had gorged on water-soaked rye bread thrown to them from a boat carrying the photographer.

The mass flights of Canada geese on November 23 and 24 were really something to behold as they traveled in their characteristic V-formations with a honking chorus audible well in advance of their appearance. Recollecting the weather with a record temperature of 80°F. on November 29, it may well be that such flights presage just such weather. If you haven't anti-freeze in the car radiator when the geese go south, take their say for

it -- cold weather really is riding closely behind them.

Among some of the more unusual birds reported locally during 1940 were the yellow-crowned night heron (Hollister) at the heronry; orchard oriole (VanVorst) at Guilderland Center during the summer; black tern (Moore) at the Crescent pool June 16; and Hungarian partridge in the Charlton-Swaggertown section. -- George H. Bainbridge, 1940 Records Commit.
. . .

The summary of the 1940-1941 winter season is now to be prepared by B. D. Miller, 1941 Records Committee. Those having record dates or unusual observations should supply them promptly to Mr. Miller.



NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF



Dues Overdue....

Dues are due. To insure receipt of FEATHERS without interruption, dues should be paid promptly to Mrs Hans Huthsteiner, 1706 Lenox Road.

Next Meeting....

The April meeting of S B C promises to be interesting. H. V. D. Allen, recently returned from California and author of one of the articles in this issue of FEATHERS is going to talk informally and lead a discussion about the birds of the west. The meeting -- Mont Pleasant High School, Room 311, Monday, April 28, at 8 p.m.

Trips Afield....

Except in special cases, with an announcement in advance, all S B C hikes will hereafter be scheduled to start at 7 a. m. from Nott Terrace High School. Those with available automobiles should use them, as transportation plans

will often be a question. The first of the year's hikes have already been held. Others are now on the schedule as follows:

Saturday, April 19 -- Crescent Lake section of the river.

Sunday, April 20 -- Duplicate of April 19 trip.

Saturday, April 26 -- Central Park.

Saturday, May 3 -- Place unassigned.

Saturday, May 10 -- Place unassigned.

Saturday, May 17 -- Place unassigned.

Saturday, May 24 -- Place unassigned.

Additional to these scheduled trips there will, of course, be an abundance of additional ones. All members should keep in mind the fact that there is scarcely a day when trips are not being made and that rare indeed is the week-end without trips on both days. It is only necessary to inquire to find others interested in making a trip at any time. -- B. S. Havens.

SOME BIRDS OF THE WEST

H. V. D. Allen

It was my good fortune to be able to spend four months in California this past winter, covering the period from early October to the middle of February. I went out by train to Denver and through the Royal Gorge to Salt Lake City and across the northern Nevada deserts, returning by the same route except up the Colorado River Canon and through the Moffatt Tunnel.

Western bird life began for me some 200 miles east of Denver at 5 o'clock in the morning when I began to see hawks on the telegraph wires and shortly after noticed flashes of white on numerous large black birds. These turned out to be the American, or black-billed magpie.

Of course the bird is not really black, but that is the way he appears from a fast-moving train when one is entirely unprepared for the sight. I counted 64 of them all the way from Denver south through Colorado Springs to Pueblo and up the Arkansas River Canon through the Royal Gorge, and the next morning, going into Salt Lake City, and all the following day crossing the Nevada deserts to the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevadas. Going through Nevada the train follows the Humbolt River until it peters out and turns into a series of mud holes in the desert. There was one great blue heron, presumably the western variety, on the shore of one of these mud holes.

During my stay in California I was with friends in Berkeley, just across San Francisco Bay from the Golden Gate and up the hillside some 700 feet, high enough to be above most of the bay fog. My first thrill was an unknown bird on the lawn at the back of the house. It looked like a cross between a cat-bird and a thrush, having somewhat the shape of the former and the co-

loring and throat streaking of the latter. It was obviously necessary that I should get a book on California birds. The library had Mrs. Bailey's "Handbook of Birds of the Western U. S." The bird turned out to be the California brown towhee. After being fooled that way, it seemed advisable to be ready for almost anything.

Shortly after this I located the Nuttall white-crowned sparrow which certainly in the fall is about as common as the English sparrow here. I saw only a dozen English sparrows there in four months. Then followed the rusty song sparrow, much darker than ours but obviously a song sparrow. I had some discussion with the authorities at the University of California on this bird, which disappeared in December and was replaced by the Santa Cruz song sparrow, a very much paler bird with an extraordinarily large black spot on the breast. It was asserted that what I had called the rusty song was the summer plumage of the Santa Cruz. I was unconvinced.

The Oregon junco showed up the latter part of October. His black head and neck and olive sides made him a very attractive little bird. He stayed all winter and was still eating seeds on the back porch when I left in February, along with him at that time were the fox sparrow, the brown rather than the gray variety; the golden-crowned sparrow in winter plumage; the house finch or linnet; and the spurred towhee, a glorious bird with lots of white on the back; and, of course, the ever-present brown towhee.

It was the finest assortment of birds I have ever seen gathered around a supply of bird seed. The seed was placed on a porch outside a large plate glass window reaching

to the floor, so that it was possible to get within three or four feet of the birds. The bright California sunshine seemed somehow to increase the brilliance of the coloring.

When it comes to the water birds the list is a long one. It begins with the Farallone cormorant and the California brown pelican on the rocks of the Pacific coast west of San Francisco. The cormorants also showed up on the east side of San Francisco Bay along the boulevard, and later in the year I got the white pelican, particularly one flock of 75 in straight-line formation flying over the marshes toward the southern end of the bay. Wonderful birds, with their big bills and pouches, white bodies, and black outer wings.

The western sandpiper showed up by the thousands, and the longer bill with its deep base was quite apparent. There were also large numbers of red-backed sandpipers in winter plumage, with the definitely curved bill. On a drive south of Oakland, along the mud flats of the bay, I got the western willet, the long-billed dowitcher, and the marbled godwit. Some 20 miles farther south at the eastern end of the San Mateo Bridge which crosses the bay, there were more mud flats and perhaps 50 of the godwits and a hundred of the willets, and then a pair of avocets, making a total of four counting a pair I had previously seen at the north end of San Francisco Bay some 60 miles away.

I should not forget to mention the hundred or more northern phalaropes along the Bay Shore Boulevard close to Berkeley. They disappeared in December, and were succeeded by a few red phalaropes in winter plumage.

Throughout the fall and up to the middle of December there were large numbers of Bonaparte's gulls in winter plumage, that is, with

the black spot on the side of the white head, along the boulevard. They seemed to take the place of the laughing gulls along the Massachusetts coast. I mention the Bay Shore Boulevard as this is the customary way to drive from Berkeley to San Francisco. There are three miles of it, and if you drive slowly and don't mind other cars going past at 60 miles an hour, you get a wonderful view of almost everything there is to be seen in the way of water and shore birds.

The western gull corresponds to the great black-barked gull of the east, but is not quite so large and its mantle is not so dark. I should say it was much more common. The herring gull occupies much the same position east or west, and can be seen in great numbers. The California gull I found uncommon. Its very light green legs show up when you get a good look at it.

About the middle of January I found a flock of about 50 small gulls circling about near the discharge of a storm sewer along the Bay Shore Boulevard, which I am sorry to say I have not identified. They included both adult and immature birds and did not check with Bonaparte's, which at that time had disappeared but were seen at Carmel, 150 miles away, as the adults did not have the black spot on the side of the head. Also, they were not laughing gulls as the immatures did not check. On the other hand, the adults showed evidence of a black head in the summer.

Also to be seen along the Bay Shore Boulevard were the western grebe with its very long white throat and the eared grebe with its much shorter neck. In January there were a pair of pied-bills along with the other two.

On January 9 we drove across the Bay Bridge to San Francisco, then through the city and over the Golden Gate Bridge to the high, rocky

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point on the northwest shore of San Francisco Bay, finally bringing up at the little town of Tiberon with its disused ferry slip. This ferry slip and the bay outside were almost literally covered with ducks, mostly surf scoters, parading back and forth single file. Who chose the leading duck in each case I do not know, but one line was solemnly following the lead of a scaup. I do not know whether I would be high in estimating 1000 scoters, as I gave up any attempt to count them, but there were about 100 canvas-backs, 50 scaup, a dozen American golden-eyes, and a dozen ruddies.

It was on this trip that I saw the Marin County chickadee (*Parus rufescens neglectus*) which it is claimed is a separate variety of that form of the chestnut-backed chickadee from that on the south of the Golden Gate (*P. r. barlowi*).

On January 11 we drove to Monterey and Carmel, taking two days for the trip and covering the 17-mile drive along the shore south of Monterey, the Pebble Beach golf course, and the Point Lobos State Reservation, both near Carmel. It was on this drive that I saw the 75 white pelicans, and the yellow-billed magpies which are restricted to the central California valleys, the black-billed magpies being restricted to the country east of the Sierra Nevadas. Along the highway were sparrow hawks and large flocks of Brewer's blackbirds, the males with white eyes and the females with black. South of Monterey the coast is a succession of rocky headlands separated by sandy coves with seaweed-covered rocks, and here I saw six black turnstones, which take the place of the ruddy turnstone of the eastern coast. They could be identified by the white patch on the tail. Here again I had trouble with the U. of C. which claimed that the turnstones should not have been so far north and that it was more likely I

had seen the wandering tattler.*

Floating seaweed in the coves grows in tufts six inches above the water. At a distance it can easily be mistaken for a flock of ducks. On this same trip I got the black phoebe, colored much the same as our junco but darker, and the Say phoebe which looks like a yellow-bellied flycatcher, also a pair of shrikes, and a couple of pipits.

I cannot bring this list of birds to a close without mentioning Lake Merritt in Oakland. It is in the center of the city and is surrounded by park drives and grass lawns. You can see at any time in the winter on these lawns a hundred each of American coot, pintails and baldpates, and in the water as many more coots and perhaps 50 canvas-backs and 500 ruddy ducks. It is a grand sight.

Along in January I began finding the bush tit in the thick trees and bushes along the roadsides in Berkeley. This find completes my list of 85 birds, with one exception on the train coming home. As we passed up the Colorado River and through the canon I saw six of what I believe to be the water ouzel or dipper. These birds were observed here and there over a distance of some miles, all standing on the snow along the bank. I saw one of these birds dive into the river; otherwise I might have doubted whether they were really birds. They would be worth watching for by anyone going through the mountains. They may be fairly common.

*Editor's Note: In this connection it is interesting to note that in the Audubon Society's Christmas Census for Monterey on December 24 black turnstones but not tattlers were included, and that the turnstones appeared also on other California censuses.

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HUNTING WITH MICROPHONE AND COLOR CAMERA

Dr. Arthur A. Allen of Cornell University to Speak Again in Schenectady -- Meeting Scheduled for Friday, May 16, in Rice Hall of General Electric Company -- Special Tickets Required for Meeting

Four years ago many who are today members of the Schenectady Bird Club were privileged to hear a talk by Dr. Arthur A. Allen, professor of ornithology at Cornell University. Now they are to have the opportunity to hear him again in a new talk. On Friday night, May 16, at 8:20 p.m. Dr. Allen will address a meeting in Rice Hall, General Electric Company, on "Hunting with Microphone and Color Camera." The meeting will be sponsored jointly by the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club and the Schenectady Bird Club. Admission will be by ticket only, and there will be no charge for tickets. The S B C tickets will be available only to those holding the 1941-1942 membership cards.

Because the seating capacity of Rice Hall is limited, it will be necessary to issue tickets only to members, except that on May 12 remaining tickets will be made available for outside distribution as they may be on hand. S B C members should notify Mrs. Chester N. Moore or Miss Nelle VanVorst. Since it is known that the demand for tickets will be heavy, it is asked that they be returned if not required.

The meeting will be held in Rice Hall since Dr. Allen is appearing on a WGY Farm Forum program that evening. The program must go on the air promptly at 8:30 p.m., so it will be necessary to close the doors at 8:20 o'clock to have all in readiness for the broadcast. Dr. Allen will be the first speaker on the program and will be followed by another Farm Forum speaker. At 9 o'clock Dr. Allen will again address the audience. Children cannot be admitted to the meeting, and it will be necessary to show the special tickets at the General Electric main gate.

Dr. Allen's talk will be illustrated with color-films and with the songs and calls of birds accurately recorded on film and carefully transcribed. His talk is the story of a 20,000-mile expedition with color cameras and microphones to secure a realistic panorama of American bird-life in color and song. With two assistants Dr. Allen traveled from coast to coast in a sound truck exploring the most interesting bird habitats from New York to Florida and California. From coastal marshes and sandy de-

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serts to timber line in the high Sierras, they carried their equipment, including blinds and sound-recording apparatus and made studies such as have never been made before.

"Filled with human interest and spectacular views is this argosy of a college professor who has brought back the rich colors, the strange voices and the amusing behavior of the rarest and most bizarre of our North American birds as well as the cheerful songs and friendly ways of our more familiar species," says one reporter.

"Wild turkeys gobbled, cranes whooped, swans trumpeted, prairie chickens tooted, ruffed grouse drummed, golden eagles screamed, mockingbirds sang, and a baby willet learned to walk; the miraculous professor seemed always to be ready with his microphone and his camera," said another.

Dr. Allen is the author of "The Book of Bird Life," "American Bird

Biographies," "The Golden Plover and Other Birds," and "Ornithology Laboratory Notebook." He is a fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, a founder of the American Society of Mammalogists and of the Wild-life Society, of which he was president in 1938, a member of Sigma Xi, of the American Society of Naturalists, and the Cooper and Wilson Ornithological Clubs; a member of the advisory board of the National Audubon Society; a trustee of the American Wild-life Institute; first chairman of the research division of the National Game Conference; recipient of the Out-Door-Life Medal for outstanding service to wild-life conservation, and Cayuga Bird Club president.

Dr. Allen is well known to sportsmen for his investigation of grouse epidemics and for solving the mystery of rearing grouse in captivity. To bird students he is best known for his intimate stories and remarkable photographs of bird life which have appeared in leading periodicals for many years.

MAY -- A BUSY MONTH

It hardly seems necessary to say that May is a busy month for bird students. In this latitude it witnesses the height of migration. There are birds aplenty to be seen on field trips.

The S B C calendar of events is a full one, as well it should be. As announced by the program and the field - activities committees the dates to bear in mind for the remainder of the month are:

Sunday, May 11 -- Trip to Indian Ladder, Miss Dorothy Caldwell the leader. Starting from Nott Terrace High School at 7 a.m. The worm-eating warbler one of the interesting possibilities.

Friday, May 16 - Talk by Dr. Arthur A. Allen, at 8:20 p. m., Rice

Hall, General Electric Company. For details see page 33.

Saturday, May 17 -- Trip to the heronry and to the Vischer Ponds, E. V. D. Allen the leader. The night herons were nesting before the end of April, so this date should be a good one. Wear old clothes. Meet, as usual, at the high school.

Sunday, May 18 -- Annual Mohawk Valley Hiking Club trip to Big Nose, with S B C members again invited. Plenty of birds to be seen, with hawks and warblers among the most promising. Meet the bus at 9:15 a. m. at State and Erie, with provisions for two meals. Transportation assessment - 75 cents for active members, \$1.00 for associate members.

Sunday, May 25 -- Field trip in Central Park, leader unassigned. Meet at High School, 7 a.m. Should still include plenty of warblers.

Monday, May 26 -- Regular S B C meeting, in Central Park as a picnic. Meet at Casino at 6:15 p.m., with your own lunch or dinner or supper. Weather inclement -- meeting cancelled. Have you paid attention to sunset songs of the birds? This is an opportunity to hear them.

Friday, May 30 (Memorial Day) - Annual excursion into the Karner's pine barrens - sand dunes section. The prairie warbler probable, not to mention the song of the yellow-breasted chat. Start from the High School at 7 a. m.


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Saturday, May 31 - Vale Cemetery with Barrington S. Havens the leader. Usual meeting place and time.

Also, arrangements are being completed for the announced visit to the Delmar station of the Conservation Department. It, too, may be a May event. There'll be a special notice about this special trip. This issue went to press too early to include the details.



NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF

Crows vs. Flicker

Three S B C members in Central Park on April 27 witnessed a battle between two crows and a flicker on the ground. The flicker, an adult, was rescued, but it had been so severely injured -- with flopping neck -- that it did not recover. The start of the fight was not observed, so it is not known whether or not the flicker was initially in good condition.

Headed North

In typical V-formation, a flock of nearly thirty Canada geese went over Niskayuna silently early in the afternoon of April 26, headed northwest and apparently not at all interested in tarrying on the Mohawk.

Old-squaws

Of probably most interest of the birds observed on the S B C trip to the Crescent Lake section of the

Mohawk River on April 19 was a flock of a couple dozen old-squaws, including both sexes and with both winter and summer plumages in evidence. On the club trip on the following day to the same section, the birds were not again seen.

Setting a Record

More than one feeding-station operator has found it possible to identify at least some of the regular boarders by reason of some slight deformity or plumage peculiarity, but W. L. Merrill's station in Scotia probably sets a record.

During the 1939-1940 winter season he had a one-legged downy woodpecker as a regular visitor. During this past winter he had not only the same one-legged woodpecker but a one-legged white-breasted nuthatch in addition, not to mention a chickadee with a crippled though still-present leg.

Do other local feeding-station operators have records of easily identified visitors?

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Nesting Broadwings

Two seasons ago (FEATHERS, October, 1939, page 21) the broad-winged hawk was listed as a summer resident, and probably breeding, at Consalus Vlaie. At that time, however, a definite nesting record was not available.

Now it can be shown definitely as a breeder there. W. Roy Steele saw the nest, as well as the birds, there on April 27.

Incidentally, the marsh hawk is also a breeding summer resident of the Vlaie, back in the swamp so well surrounded with poison sumac.

Off Their Beaten Path

Sort of off their beaten path were a pair of shovelers in one of the numerous marsh jungles along the Crescent Lake section of the Mohawk River on April 26 and 27. The birds were definitely paired, and they showed real concern for a particular corner of the marsh, from which a dog had flushed them. Repeatedly during the two days the ducks would return to that section; and the male circled repeatedly overhead when observers were too close to that section. The shoveler is a river duck, but it seems hardly to be expected that it is to be added to the list of the several species known to breed locally.

Shore-birds

Among last autumn's shore-bird records of Dorothy Caldwell were the greater yellow-legs at Saratoga Lake October 19 and 25 and November 3; at least a dozen red-backed sandpipers at Watervliet Reservoir, with the de-curved, long bills seen very plainly; and two black-bellied plover at Saratoga Lake October 25, with the black axillars plainly seen in flight, and their heavy black beaks likewise plainly seen while they fed on a mud flat.

Saratoga Lake can be recommended along with the reservoir as a good place to watch for shore-birds.

Worn-out Feeder

There's at least one local bird feeding station that will need to be replaced. Throughout the winter peanut butter was spread on the rough board nailed to a tree. By spring the board was pretty well soaked with peanut oil. And then the red squirrels went to work on it. They chewed up most of the sections where the peanut oil had penetrated, and the board somewhat disintegrated.

Cemetery Crossbills

Through the winter there were reports of red crossbills throughout the northeast, but apparently none closer to us than Glens Falls. And then, on April 8, a flock of about 15 was found feeding in the top of a pine, on the seeds in the cones, in Vale Cemetery by Barrington S. Havens. A flock of a half dozen pine siskins was seen on the same trip; there had been a flock of the birds there a month earlier, but they had been absent since. As to the crossbills, one was independently found in the cemetery later that morning by Nelle VanVorst.

Audubon Trips

Members of S B C have been invited to attend the sessions and take part in the field trips of the 37th annual convention of the National Audubon Society, in New York City October 17 to 21 inclusive. Field trips are planned for Saturday and Sunday, the 18th and 19th.

Protect the Wood Duck

No open season on the wood duck is something to strive for. The species was nearly wiped out years ago. Closed season year after year has slowly brought back the bird, but it is still uncommon. Enough of them are shot now by hunters who don't know what they're hitting; an open season would decimate them, and they can't stand it. There's

agitation for an open season; what is needed is emphatic counter-agitation.

Orange-crowned

Two orange-crowned warblers, the most inconspicuously colored of the generally brilliant warblers, were seen by W. R. Steele and four other observers in Central Park April 26. This warbler is one of the most uncommonly seen, or at least most uncommonly identified, of those we have locally.

Among Local Authors

Particularly because of the article by Miss Dorothy Caldwell, "Some Studies of Winter Bird Populations," in our last issue (page 25), an article in the April issue of Bird-Banding is of special local interest. It is by George J. Wallace of the Pleasant Valley Bird and Wild Flower Sanctuary at Lenox, Mass., and is entitled "Winter Studies of Color-banded Chickadees." Miss Caldwell reported on her observations of chickadees wearing the aluminum numbered band and one band in color; Mr. Wallace reports on observations made on birds wearing combinations of bands of half width, in different colors.

The March issue of The Bulletin to the Schools, of The University of the State of New York, is the annual arbor day and bird day number. Included in the ten articles on birds is one by Dr. Dayton Stoner, Albany, on "Bird Casualties on the Highways." Also of local interest is the report by Dr. Reginald D. Maxwell of Syracuse University on "Homing Instinct of the Red-winged Blackbird" (FEATHERS, 1940, p. 61).

The Auk for April, 1941, contains several items of local interest:

"Homing Instinct of the Red-winged Blackbird" by Reginald D. Maxwell of Syracuse University re-

ports on returns of male red-wings released at various places. Seven were released at Schoenectady, 114 miles distant. One returned in 12 days, making the best recorded time. Another was back in 16 days, and a third in 21 days.

William Marcus Ingram reports from the Edmund Miles Huyok Preserve, Rensselaerville, on observing an American bittern swallow a 12-inch garter snake.

Verdi Burch reports on three years' observations of common tern nests at Oneida Lake.

"American Egrets Observed from a Hudson River Steamer" is the subject of an item by Dr. Dayton Stoner, Albany, in the March, 1941, issue of The Wilson Bulletin. He summarizes records made between Albany and Kingston Point, 1937 and 1940, and in conclusion states he would not be surprised to find a nesting of the egret there soon.

New Publications

COMMON HAWKS OF NORTH AMERICA, Publication No. 81 of the Emergency Conservation Committee, New York, 10 cents. Written by Rosalie Edge and Ellsworth D. Lumley, with introduction by Ira N. Gabrielson. A 28-page booklet with a dozen drawings by Peterson, J. B. May's chart of flight patterns, and numerous other illustrations. With plenty of same information about hawks and their status, their field characteristics, food analyses, and protection.

BIRD ISLANDS DOWN EAST, Helen G. and Allan D. Cruickshank; National Audubon Society, \$2.50. Bird-watching on the islands off the coast of Maine, with 50 photographs

THE AUDUBON GUIDE TO ATTRACTING BIRDS, edited by John H. Baker; National Audubon Society, \$2.50.

FROM ROBIN TO JUNCO, Mary I. Curtis; Houghton Mifflin Co. \$1.35. A book for children.

WHO SAID THERE ARE NO MORE PASSENGER PIGEONS?

Some of the Experiences of a Merit Badge Counselor
for Bird Study for the Boy Scouts of America

Barrington S. Havens

Who said the passenger pigeon is extinct? If you were a merit badge counselor for bird study in the B.S.A., you might soon begin to wonder about this, for every once in a while a merit badge aspirant will report the bird on his list as observed at some time or other during the past six or eight months. Such claims, made by overzealous youngsters all too anxious to win enough merit badges to qualify as Eagle Scouts, are not unusual to the examiner, and it often requires a considerable amount of tact and patience to convince the applicant of any error.

If we were to believe some of the young hopefuls, we should speedily convince ourselves that the bob-white is a not uncommon species in this locality, that the orchard oriole is at least as common as the Baltimore species, and that the cardinal has extended the northernmost limits of its range much more rapidly than S B C observers give it credit for.

For those aspiring to the bird study merit badge are nothing if not courageous in tackling these and other problems even more difficult to the more experienced older. Such nice distinctions as the difference between sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks and between the two cuckoos seem to be considerably less difficult to the up-and-coming young scout than to some veterans.

Let no one mistake — the bird study merit badge is a tough one for the boys. If you don't believe it, just look over the following requirements which have been set up by national scout headquarters. These requirements are interesting, and comments have been made in connection with each one.

1. Produce a list of 40 species of wild birds which have been personally observed and positively id-

entified in the field, and tell how to differentiate each from other species with which it might be confused. ... To meet this requirement in full, according to the spirit which breathes through it, a neophyte would have to spend at least a year, and preferably two, in his preparatory study. Most boys seem to build up a list as quickly as they can, including such items as "blackbird," "chicken hawk," "sparrow," "mad hen," "warbler," etc. One of the greatest sources of trouble is the fact that the boy usually lists but 40 birds; as a consequence, if a few are stricken from the list for one reason or another by the examiner, the boy is disqualified at the outset.

2. Produce a list showing the greatest number of species that he has seen in the field in one week. ... Offhand, this doesn't seem to be particularly useful as a requirement, but it can serve as a guide to the boy's knowledge. If it contains (as it often does) merely ten or a dozen birds, it is obvious that the boy hasn't gotten very far in bird study. And the list has to be watched to see that it does not contain species which are highly unlikely to have been found in this vicinity during the same week; as an extreme example, the snow bunting and oriole should not be on the same week's list.

3. Produce a list derived from personal reading of: (a) 20 species

of birds particularly noted for their value to agriculture in the destruction of insects and weed seeds; (b) 10 birds of prey particularly useful in the destruction of rats and mice; (c) 10 species of fish-eating birds, and tell why they are not inimical to man's interests. ... In the writer's opinion, this requirement is loaded with dynamite, in more ways than one. Take (a) for example. While the number of birds which eat insects and weed seed is legion, how many can we honestly say are "particularly noted for their value to agriculture" in this respect? The scout handbook gives the red-wing and bronzed grackle under the heading of Useful Birds, as enemies of insects. True, it doesn't say they are "particularly" useful, etc., but the scout, leaning on his handbook as his aid, accepts them as such and puts them down on his list. Similarly, the handbook lists the great horned owl, snowy owl, and crow, among others, as useful bird enemies of mice. They are, of course, enemies of mice. But they are, as every experienced and well-read bird student knows, enemies of much more. In the writer's opinion, any attempt to whitewash these birds, even by implication, will do the cause of bird conservation more ultimate harm than good.

4. Describe at least two bird boxes and two food tables that have been erected by him, the species of birds that have been attracted by them, and how many of the birds have nested in the boxes. ... This seems like a very good requirement, but it has some difficulties for city-dwelling scouts. City bird houses and feeding stations generally attract little more than starlings and English sparrows, although persistence and care will bring jays, nuthatches, woodpeckers and chickadees, if the location is not too unfavorable. Some sort of guidance seems to be needed in order that the boys will choose a suitable site for such activities;

otherwise the effort will be largely wasted.

5. From personal observation name and describe the birds he has seen in three different habitats (open fields, woodlands, farmland, marsh, etc.) and tell why all birds do not choose the same habitat. Make at least three visits to each type of countryside. OR Make a census of the bird-life of a 25-acre tract by systematically covering the ground on three separate days and listing the species and number of individuals of each observed. ... This also looks like a good requirement -- but it's a tough one.

6. State what he did to protect birds from slaughter; and to promote the creation of bird preserves and sanctuaries. ... In our opinion, this requirement is ridiculous. In answer to the first part, 99 boys out of 100 will say: "I saw some fellows shooting at birds with a BB gun (or slingshot, or throwing stones at them), so I told them to stop it." I am at a loss to know what any boy could answer to the second half. Promoting the creation of bird preserves and sanctuaries is a big enough job for his elders; the most any good scout can do is to help in the establishing and maintaining of such sanctuaries once created.

After the boys have satisfied these requirements this examiner, at least, usually brings out the New York State book of bird plates and asks the boy to identify those more or less common birds which either he ought to know or were on his list of 40 birds. This hasard over, he can depart with the coveted signature on his card, indicating he has been successfully over the jumps. All that remains is for him to appear before the court of honor and receive the award.

Bear in mind, any scout has to pass bird study to become an eagle scout. How many of our readers could pass it?

THE BIRDS OF BONAVENTURE

Barbara Overman

On a rocky promontory, jutting outward toward the sea,
Where the sunshine's brightest glory makes a sparkling melody,
In the chill of early Springtime, ere the ice and snow have ceased,
Creatures of the air and water come to Bonaventure's breast.

Mystery yet enshrouds their coming;
No one knows just when or how
Till some fisher hears their voices
From across his craft's own prow.
Feasting till their feast be prof-
fered,

Fill the earth and sea lie bare,
Bonaventure's birds grow sparer,
Awaiting their more bounteous fare.
Nesting in each rock and crevice,
Scattered over sheer cliff's face,
Gulls and gannets, murrees and
pigeons,

Kittiwakes, cormorants, penguins
grace

The islet.

Rising from its sides in pale
clouds,

Fluttering on each shelf and ledge,
Flying seaward in wide circles,
Or a curving, whirling wedge,
Bonaventure's birds commune thus
With the earth and sky and sea,
That to creatures wholly earthbound
They may give eternity; ---
For from simple creatures' living
More complex in nature's span
May by casual observation
Add to life's most humble plan.
Fed from bare earth's leanest
larder,

Sheltered by its open sea,
Blown by storms and tried by high
gales,

Warmed but by the sunlit sea,
Life has held for them the great
grace;

Living has proved but one thing, --
That the Spirit who makes creatures
Is their Hope, their Faith, their
King.

When November's wind blows fiercely
And the winter's cold returns,
Southward migrate birds of Gaspe,
Where a kindlier, warm sun burns.
Yet each year, with Spring, re-
turning,

Renewing hope they might have lost,
Bonaventure's birds come homeward,
Aware the journey's worth the cost
In providence.

BUOYANT BIRDS

B. D. Miller

When Mr. Cruickshank lectured here recently a few of us understood him to say that loons have swim-bladders, whereby they are able to regulate their buoyancy. The grebes are other swimmers with some apparent control of the water displacement of their bodies.

We have noticed how these birds float high or low, seemingly at will, but never concerned ourselves as to how it is done. As with submarines or fish with swim-bladders, controllable air chambers would seem the logical mechanism.

As it was "news" to us, we wanted to be more certain of the explanation and wrote to the American Museum of Natural History for confirmation. From them we received the rather disappointing reply: "No birds have swim bladders." To this answer they add: "There are large air spaces located in various parts of the body, even invading the bones of many species, but these are found in land birds as well as water birds and have no function connected with buoyancy in water."

In discussing the subject with other local bird students a disagreement arose as to whether fishes have any control of their floating ability. So this question was also put to the Museum's ichthyologist, who states: "In most fishes it (air bladder) has a hydrostatic function, secreting or absorbing gas so as to counteract the changes of pressure at different depths."

With those answers we are still in the "dark" as to how they do it. Can anybody give us a guess?

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HUNTING BIRDS WITH A MICROPHONE

How the Songs of American Birds Have Been Recorded Permanently -- Some of the Difficulties Encountered -- Wherein Birds' Hearing Differs

Dr. Arthur A. Allen, Professor of Ornithology,
Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.

It is a far cry from bombs to birds -- from the crash of war to the trills of a thrush -- and perhaps my subject seems inappropriate when our thoughts are on the blasting of cities and the torpedoing of ships at sea. And yet, even on this very evening, when perhaps bombs are bursting in London, Liverpool and Berlin, the nightingale is singing in Surrey; and tomorrow, the skylark will rise over Coventry as though nothing had happened and as though all that is really worth while is blue sky and green fields and a nest among the grasses.

In this country, as the wheels of industry whirl faster and faster, the robins carol from the rooftops, the bobolinks pipe from the fields, and the hermit thrushes sound their organ-like notes from the forests, as though man and his works were insignificant in a universe that has seen the rise and falls of Caesars and Napoleons and the disappearance of whole civilizations without the change of a single note in the song of a bird. For the song of a bird epitomizes a stage in the evolution of the uni-

verse, compared with which man and his deeds and his jargon of languages and dialects are but fleeting and ephemeral things. And when the war is over and many other wars have come and gone, the robin will continue to sing as he sang when Columbus discovered America, and as he was singing when the first ape-man hurled a rock at his neighbor.

So perhaps we can justify ourselves in pausing at our labors occasionally, to listen to these outpourings of Nature that are as much a part of this great land of ours as are the mountains and the great plains and the forests, the fountain-head for all agriculture and industry.

We at Cornell, of the Laboratory of Ornithology, have undertaken not only to familiarize ourselves with the songs and calls of our native birds but, through the agencies of modern invention, to secure permanent records of their voices comparable to the books in a library or the paintings in a gallery -- records that will help you and your friends to know the sounds of Na-

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ture and to derive real enjoyment from your ears when you are out-of-doors. At the same time these records afford us an opportunity for making an accurate laboratory analysis of the songs of the various species and help us to understand the mechanisms of sound production and sound reception.

Low Frequencies Unheard

We are too prone to interpret what we see and what we hear in nature in terms of our own eyes and ears, not realizing that other creatures see and hear quite differently from ourselves. Does it ever occur to you, for example, that the starling fighting the other birds at your feeding station is oblivious to your imprecations and does not take alarm until you clap your hands or make some sudden motion, because he does not hear the low frequencies of ordinary human voice? Has it occurred to you that the sort of thrill you feel when you hear the voice of a friend in a strange crowd is felt a hundred-fold by a bird because its range of hearing corresponds roughly to the sounds which its kind produces, and it is probably totally oblivious to the great volume of other sounds that are outside its narrow hearing range?

The main objective of our studies and our expeditions with the sound truck are to secure as complete a record as possible of the voices of our native birds and to transcribe them to phonograph records, by which they become available to any who wish to familiarize themselves with the songs of birds. These records make a helpful shortcut, an open sesame, to the long, difficult task of learning the whole infinitely varied and minutely differentiated range of bird music.

Method of Recording

I believe you will be interested

in our method of recording. Imagine, if you will, a scarlet tanager sitting on the top-most bough of a hemlock near a woodland road accessible to our sound truck. He was singing from this same tree when we passed yesterday morning, and this indicates to us that he is no mere transient on his way north but that he has selected this corner of the woods as his nesting territory, where he hopes to find a mate and raise a family. Migrating or wandering birds seldom come back day after day to the same perch from which to sing, but birds that have selected their territories regularly do so, not only on succeeding days but many times during each day, and, when frightened from their song perch, soon return. So, when we stop the truck and get out the "electric ear", which is a three-foot parabola with a microphone hung at the focal point, we are not very greatly disappointed if the tanager takes alarm at our approach, for we know he will soon be back. It takes a few minutes to reel off the cable, connect the amplifier, and warm up the tubes; by this time the tanager is singing from another perch a hundred yards away. We have our choice of reeling off more cable, sending an accomplice to disturb the bird on its new song perch and induce it to return, or just waiting for it to come back. In any case, as soon as we can get the parabola on its tripod set up within fifty or a hundred feet of the singing bird, we aim it much as one aims a gun, and this has the effect of bringing the bird fifteen times as close and shutting out some of the extraneous sounds. The tanager starts to sing and the sound waves start a tremor in the microphone, transforming them into electrical vibrations which can be greatly amplified in the truck. Indeed, the infinitesimal power of the weak sound waves, now transformed and amplified, can cause a galvanometer to turn slightly, even when a tiny mirror is fastened to its wires. As the

mirror turns back and forth, a beam of light shining upon it through a slit a thousandth of an inch wide is flashed to the film which is running from one magazine to another, and the tanager's song is recorded as a photographic image on the film. The evanescent bird song then becomes an actual specimen capable of being stored in a museum, brought out at will and examined and compared with other songs, just as one studies herbarium sheets, or bird skins, or rock specimens; capable of being measured and described with mathematical accuracy like any other scientific formula; capable of being duplicated and passed from one person to another with no loss of truth or precision. In other words, the bird's song, in addition to being a charming expression of nature, inspiring somewhat vague anthropomorphic interpretations, now becomes, also, a tangible, recorded fact -- a museum specimen to be described and preserved for future generations as readily as the birds themselves.

In the Field at Dawn

Every morning during May and June, the active song season, finds us in the field at dawn with the sound truck, hoping to add new songs to our collection. We start at dawn because then there is less wind and less human activity with its resultant competitive noises.

Spring Cormorants....

Any record of the double-crested cormorant on local waters is worthy of mention, particularly in the spring. There have been occasional autumn records but apparently only one previous spring record -- on May 16, 1921, at the Crescent Pool.

On May 11, on the day of the SBC Indian Ladder trip, there were two cormorants at Watervliet Reservoir, perched in plain sight on a dead branch protruding from the water.

-- Chester N. Moore

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SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB

Annual Membership: Active, \$2; Assoc., \$1

Guy Bartlett, Editor, R.D. 1, Rosendale Road

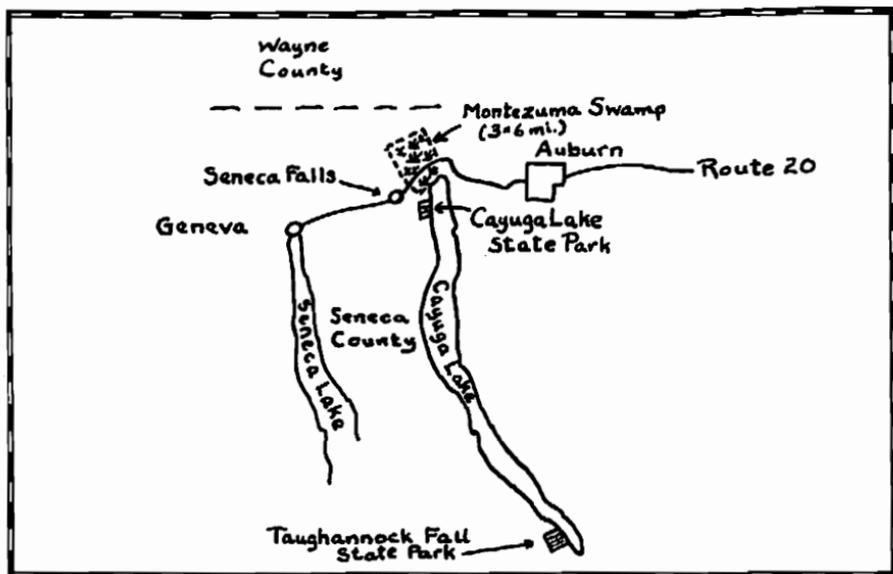
The murmuring leaves and the babbling brooks and the iron-shod milkman are all our enemies, as are motor cars and tractors and, yes, worst of all, the droming airplanes.

Through the generosity of our benefactor, Albert R. Brand, who started the work in bird song recording, we have been able, in past years, to extend our activities from Maine to Florida and to the Pacific coast, and eventually we hope to have as representative a collection of bird songs in the Cornell Museum as we have of the birds themselves.

(Editor's Note: The above is slightly modified from the talk given by Dr. Allen on the WGY Farm Forum on May 16. As part of the broadcast Dr. Allen also included recordings of various songs and calls and, following the broadcast, showed natural-color motion pictures and slides of birds throughout the country, and presented more recordings. The meeting was held in Rice Hall of the General Electric Company, open to members of the Hiking and Bird Clubs.)

Early Mourning....

The mourning warbler was one bird to upset all schedules this spring. Ordinarily it is one of the last of the warblers to arrive; it is usually late May before the males are seen, and the females are even later to appear. The earliest date on record for this vicinity was established many years back -- May 13, as recorded by Eaton. On May 4, while in Central Park with Scout merit badge aspirants, George Bainbridge identified two females.



THE MONTEZUMA SWAMP

Montezuma, Cayuga, and Other South-Central Parts
of the State Offer Plenty of Differences in
Types of Birds, Sassafras Bird Club Finds

Walter Elwood, Sassafras Bird Club,
Amsterdam, N. Y.

Up before daybreak -- an inspired outbird had begun his concert outside the cabin windows at 3 a. m. -- a cheerful gathering for coffee and rolls at 5:30 in the hospitable living room of Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Oliver almost next door, for bird-clubbers can be cheerful even at such an hour. "Flitted" one by one as we came out of the front door, twenty members of the Sassafras Bird Club were a-birding in Montezuma Swamp itself at 6 a. m.

Such was the auspicious first step of our May 17-18 field trip to the Finger Lakes region, the pleasantness and success of which was greatly added to by the tireless kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Oliver and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Marble, Seneca

Falls members of the Geneva Bird Club. The 104 species on the visiting birders' list by Sunday noon accounts for a good part of the general contentment everyone felt.

Hedden's Tourist Cabins, a couple of miles east of Seneca Falls, immaculate and comfortable, not only had birds all about but lay only a couple of miles from the famous swamp, the main objective of our week-end expedition.

When we had come prepared to wade in water and through out-tails whatever the price, it was a happy sort of shock to discover that we could walk on and on along the open and elevated tops of tow-path embankments. Even the mosquitoes

failed to register; whether because of our "flitting" or to the general excitement caused by our finding ourselves in the presence of such a wild confusion of birds, no member of the party could say for sure.

Songs of All Kinds

Those first two hours on Saturday morning proved to be an unforgettable experience. The sky was overcast, the air summer-warm, and how the birds sang! In a mad and ceaseless outpouring that simply inundated us! Tree-tops and underbrush, cat-tail thickets and willows rang out in a chorus that both charmed and bewildered us. Binoculars were pointed in every direction, for here were Florida gallinules and swamp sparrows, white-throated sparrows and indigo buntings, house wrens and mourning doves, wood thrushes, veeries, and rose-breasted grosbeaks, catbirds, crested and least flycatchers, tree swallows and black ducks, red-eyed and yellow-throated vireos, and a great array of the warbler tribe. Northern water-thrushes were everywhere, and incessant in their singing. Golden-winged and hooded warblers, Tennessee and black-throated greens interested us even more than such everyday neighbors as redstarts, northern yellowthroats, chestnut-sided and yellow warblers. A shower brought this happy chapter to a close and sent us forth to our next destination, Battie's Pond, a few miles away.

Avian Rendezvous

But the bright, cool air at 6 a. m. Sunday morning found us in Montezuma Swamp again, this time footing it along the tow-path of the Barge Canal. An abundance of bird song and easier visibility made this walk, too, outstanding. We didn't get very far, for we were constantly being halted by birds we had to look at. A willow, a maple and an oak forming an angle in the woods between a swampy glade and

the tow-path clearing turned out to be such an avian rendezvous that we stood glued there a good hour -- until we ached in every limb. It was worth it, for here we heard and saw cerulean warblers, bay-breasted and Cape May warblers, in the midst of magnolia and yellow warblers, wood pewees, least flycatchers, cowbirds, downy woodpeckers, goldfinches, red-eyed and yellow-throated vireos, and what-have-you.

Even a song sparrow got himself into the picture by ascending to the topmost branch and bursting forth. Wood ducks flew past, and the darting of tree swallows added to a scene already sufficiently in movement. In the background veeries sang, the rose-breasted grosbeak sang, and the black-billed cuckoo called. And at both ends of this walk, deer were seen.

A Federal Refuge

This Montezuma Swamp area is now a Federal Waterfowl Refuge. Three by six miles in extent, its boundaries are marked with the good-looking signs of the Fish and Wildlife Service, showing a wild goose in flight. The watch tower is up, many of the retaining dikes are built, but the actual flooding of the water will not be undertaken for a year or more. When completed, this refuge with its woodland, meadows, knolls, and small valleys, will take care of the needs of upland game as well as waterfowl. Here again the federal government has been obliged to step in and do a repair job, to undo the severe attack of drainage the area suffered at the time the Barge Canal was built.

Permits to visit the refuge are necessary. Since our guides of the Geneva Bird Club already possessed these, we suffered no delays on that score.

Even the tiny pools between the macadam road and the boundary dike

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had their black ducks, blue-winged teal, green herons, and omnipresent redwings. And the pond on the Battle farm, only a few miles drive distant, showed us a comforting aggregation of black ducks and mallards, marsh hawk and great blue heron; a hint of what may be expected when the drainage-evicted birds can return to their restored Montezuma homestead.

After a 9:30 breakfast in town Saturday morning our motorcade went poking southward along the west shore of Cayuga Lake, starting and stopping over and over again. Dark skies and a cold, misty wind made us shiver despite all the extra layers we had along ready for just such a weather-change emergency. We didn't have much time to suffer, when there was so much to be seen on Cayuga's waters -- the common loon, brant, scaup ducks, pied-billed and horned grebes, and Florida gallinules. Cayuga Lake State Park promptly displayed its red-headed woodpeckers, scarlet tanagers and Blackburnian warblers; its mountain laurel, pink azelea, and other blossoming wildflowers.

Cutting across to Geneva harbor, we watched at our leisure the many lesser scaup ducks loitering there, the abundant common terns and herring gulls, and a lone hooded merganser; and sympathized with the purple martins huddled in misery on the porches of their wind-swept houses.

A detour from Geneva into Wayne County and back to Seneca Falls showed us three turkey vultures soaring above the crest of a nearby hill, and took us through the Vanderbilt Swamps, which put on a great show of black terns, Florida gallinules, pied-billed grebes, a great blue heron, an American coot, a white-rumped sandpiper, and four of the swallow clan.

Sunday morning's second important item was a visit to Taughan-

nock Falls State Park, well down the west shore of Cayuga Lake, a beautiful ride past blue waters and blossoming apple orchards. En route we stopped to find the orchard oriole at one of his rare haunts. He wasn't in the farm dooryard he should have been in, but some of our group saw him a hundred yards farther back along the same stretch of highway.

After seeing the beautiful 215-foot Taughanhook Falls from the top of the gorge cliffs, and hearing and seeing the pine warbler, we took the two-mile columbine-spangled walk up the gorge and back. From the floor of the gorge, almost at the foot of the falls themselves, we watched an immature bald eagle soaring overhead and then coming to rest in the top of a dead pine on the brink of the cliff. He hadn't been perched there long before a duck hawk chased him off, after which the duck hawk set himself down on the root of a cliff-edge tree, giving us a chance to watch him as long as our necks could stand the strain. We spotted his nesting ledge, too, about 150 feet up the face of the cliff.

Not the least interesting sight of the many that came our way was Syracuse's famous martin house on Erie Boulevard, observed with its lively tenants while we were waiting for a red light to change to green. Built more than 100 years ago at a lock on the Erie Canal, it still retains its prospering colony, even though it now stands beside a huge, busy, filling station in the midst of heavy traffic. The old canal has been transformed into a noisy thoroughfare. A few years ago when the house had to be taken down for repairs, people thought it was being taken down permanently and raised a loud cry of protest. The house has an early American look, all the more so perched as it is atop its pole which certainly does not seem to be more than eight or nine feet high.

THE BIRDS OF CENTRAL PARK

Located Within the City, But With Such a Wide Variety of Woods and Fields, of Such an Extent, So Easily Reached, and with Trails So Available, Local Birders Have Built Up Surprisingly Large List of Visiting and Resident Species in Park And Environs

B. S. Havens & Guy Bartlett

From the earliest days of modern Schenectady bird study, when but a handful of observers made periodic rounds of the local territory, Central Park has been one of the most fruitful locations for bird records. Old-timers in the game of amateur ornithology can "remember it when." In those days the park proper was much more restricted in extent than now; a considerably greater portion was uncultivated or undeveloped. There was no golf course. Swamp sparrows and red-wings lived happily then where motorists, firemen, and devotees of the little white pill now hold forth.

But, for all its contraction and popularization, Central Park is still one of the best bird territories in our vicinity, all things considered. It is convenient. It is one of the best places to find warblers in season. And it is more or less public land, where even before-dawn visits to listen for the earliest songsters can be made.

A study of the tabulation accompanying this article shows that, up to and including 1940, 156 species of birds have been observed in Central Park and adjoining lands. Of this number 13 were resident birds -- at least theoretically, for each bird involved is of the type which is more or less non-migratory.

Summer residents so far observed

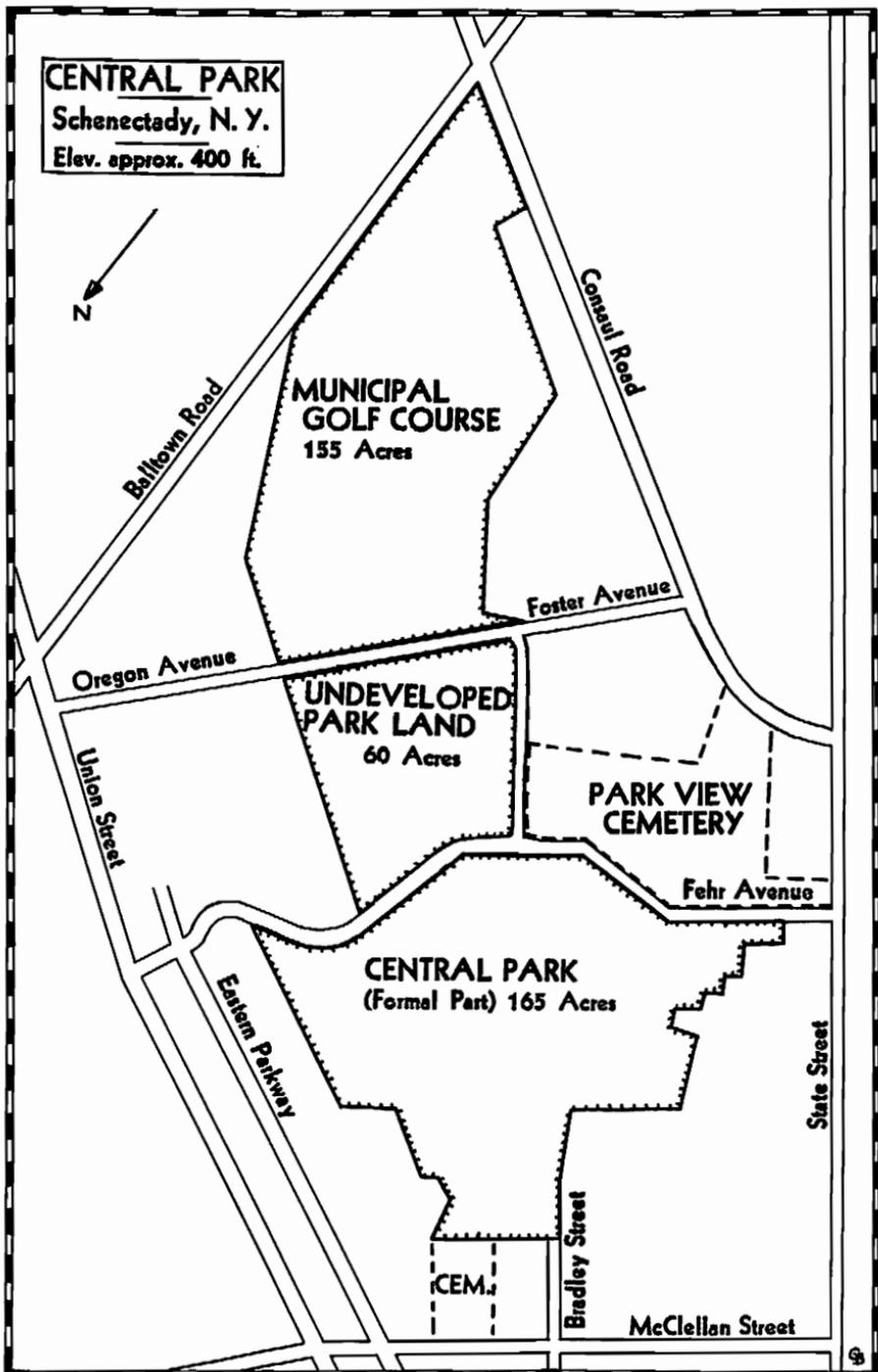
total 63 species. True, some of them may not be considered to be summer residents every year, but most of them were in that category. The remainder are accidentals, which normally would not be expected to breed in Central Park.

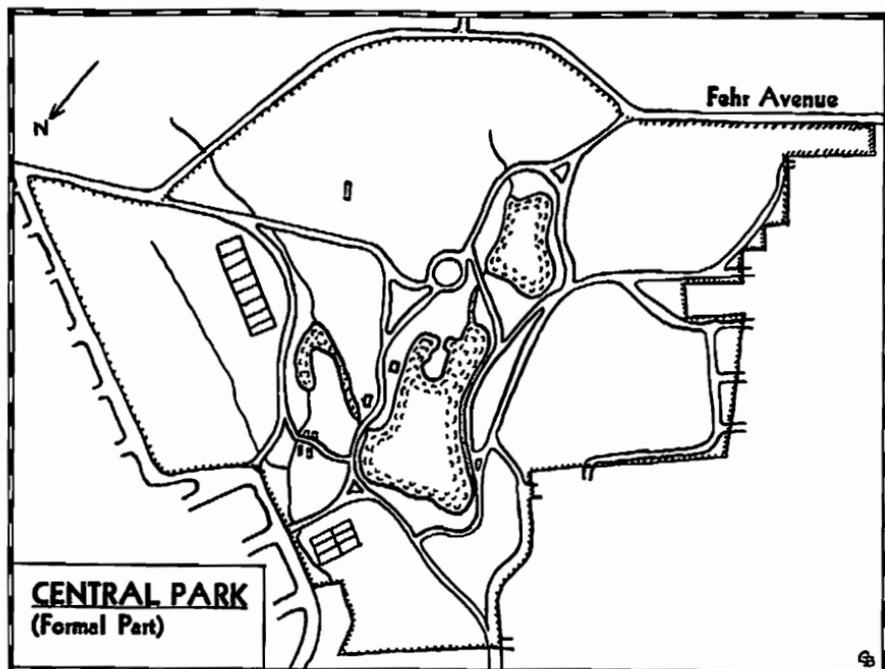
Transient visitors of course account for the largest number of the total species observed: 87. These are of all types, from the American egret and saw-whet owl on the one hand, which are prized finds for any bird observer in this locality, to the song sparrow or robin at the other extreme, which are taken for granted in any summer.

Winter visitors, finally, total 26 species. In this category, as usual, one may expect to find almost anything -- and one does, including such birds as the red crossbill and Bohemian waxwing.

It will be noted that, in the case of a number of species, the bird is listed in more than one classification. The green and black-crowned night herons, for example, have been found in the park as both transient visitors and summer residents. The sparrow hawk can be listed in three classifications: transient visitor, summer resident, and winter visitor. A few other species can also be listed in three ways.

The table is well worth a little study. It discloses a number of





interesting things. For example, one finds that nearly every class of birds is represented on the list. Readers will find other things equally revealing.

As a territory, Central Park has many advantages. It includes swampy sections, with thickly wooded areas (some of evergreens, some of deciduous trees, and some mixed), open meadows, thickets, and plenty of those border areas which are so much favored by birds. Streams, springs, ponds, and a lake vie with the sandlots and dead underbrush.

For the lover of plant life as well as birds, the park has a great deal to offer. From orchids and rare ferns to persistent second growths of chestnut trees, the plant student will find the park a fruitful place in which to spend his time. Thus, when birds are quiet or scarce, one can turn one's energies to other profitable things.

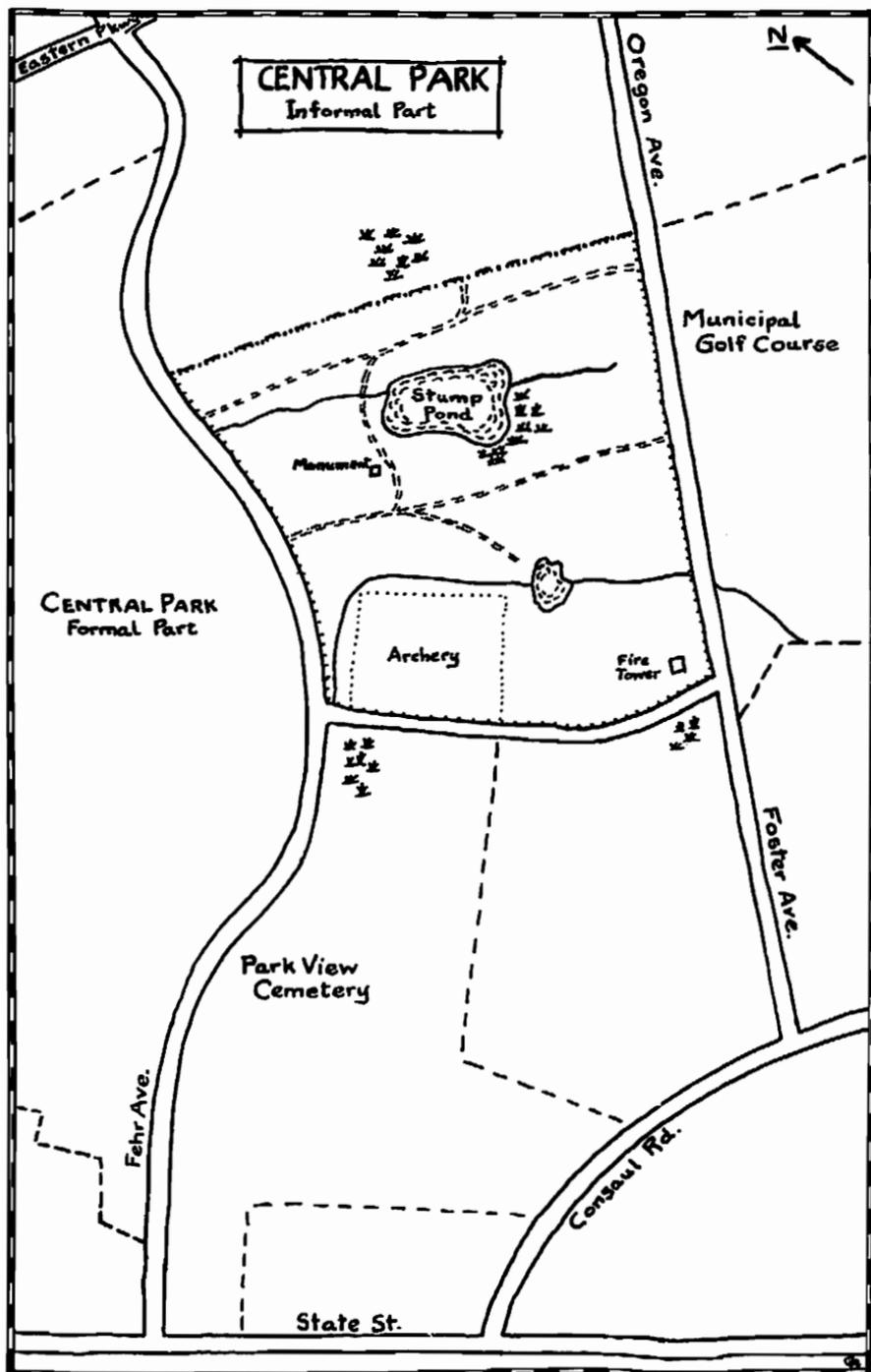
Incidentally, it should be mentioned that the records in the table are not from the list of any one observer. It includes all of those available to the club, either from previous publication, listing in Christmas Censuses, or from unpublished notes. No S B C member has seen all the birds charted, but those who have made the most trips into the park have attained the highest numbers.

Will future years reveal fewer or more average populations? It is difficult to say, but the changes which the park land has undergone indicate that there will probably be fewer species as summer residents; the swamp lands and the areas of underbrush will probably disappear. On the other hand, there is no reason why additional "one-record" species should not be expected from time to time -- and there are plenty of possibilities among the transients, the stragglers, and the accidentals.

THE BIRDS OF CENTRAL PARK, SCHENECTADY

Species	R	T	S	W	Species	R	T	S	W	Species	R	T	S	W
Great blue heron	e				Alder flycatcher	d	e			Blackburn. warb.			c	
American egret..	x				Least flycatcher		c			Chestnut-s.warb.				c
Green heron.....	c	e			Wood pewee.....		c			Bay-br. warbler			d	
Blk-cr. nt.heron	d	e			Olive-sided flyc	e				Black-poll warb.			c	
American bittern	e				No. horned lark	d	e			Pine warbler....			c	d
Canada goose....	x				Prairie h. lark	c	d			Prairie warbler			e	
Black duck.....	e	e			Tree swallow....		c			West. palm warb.			e	
Wood duck.....	e	e			Bank swallow....		d			Yel. palm warb..			d	
Turkey vulture..	x				Rough-wing swal.		e			Oven-bird.....			d	
Sharp-shin. hawk	d	e			Barn swallow....	b	d			No. water-thrush			d	
Cooper's hawk...	d	e	e		Cliff swallow...		e			La. water-thrush			d	
Red-tailed hawk	d	e			Blue jay.....	b				Mourning warbler			e	
Red-should. hawk	d	e	e		Crow.....	d	a	b		No. yellow-thr..			c	
Broad-wing. hawk	e				Chickadee.....	c		b		Yellow-br. chat			e	
Rough-leg. hawk	e	e			Wh.-br. nuthatch	c				Wilson's warbler			e	
Marsh hawk.....	d	e			Red-br. nuthatch		d	e		Canada warbler..			b	
Osprey.....	e				Brown creeper...	c	e			Amer. redstart..			b	c
Duck hawk.....	x				House wren.....		d			English sparrow	c			
Sparrow hawk....	c	d	e		Winter wren.....		d			Bobolink.....			e	
Ruffed grouse...	e				Catbird.....		c			Meadowlark.....			d	
Pheasant.....	d				Brown thrasher..		d			Red-wing.....			d	
Killdeer.....		e			Robin.....		b			Baltimore oriole			d	
Woodcock.....		d			Wood thrush....		d			Rusty blackbird			c	
Wilson's snipe..	d				Hermit thrush...		c			Bronzed grackle			c	
Spotted sandp..	d	e			Olive-back. thr.		d			Cowbird.....			c	
Solitary sandp..	d				Gray-cheek. thr.		e			Scarlet tanager			d	
Least sandpiper	e				Veery.....		c			Cardinal.....			x	
Semipalm. sandp.	e				Bluebird.....		d			Rose-br. grosbk.			d	
Herring gull....	e				Gold-or. kinglet		a	e		Indigo bunting..			d	
Mourning dove...	c				Ruby-cr. kinglet		b			Evening grosbeak				e
Yellow-b. cuckoo	e				Pipit.....		e			Purple finch....			b	d
Blk-bill. cuckoo	d				Bohemian waxwing		x			Pine grosbeak...			d	e
Screech owl....	e				Cedar waxwing...		b	c	e	Redpoll.....			c	
Great horned owl	e				Northern shrike		e			Pine siskin....			d	
Snowy owl.....			x		Starling.....	a				Goldfinch.....	d		c	
Barred owl....	e				Yel.-thr. vireo		d			Red crossbill..			c	e
Saw-whet owl...	x				Blue-head. vireo		c			Towhee.....			c	
Whip-poor-will..	e				Red-eyed vireo..		c			Savannah sparrow			d	e
Nighthawk.....		d			Philadelph.vireo		e			Grasshopper spar			d	
Chimney swift...		b			Warbling vireo..		c			Vesper sparrow..			c	
Hummingbird.....		d			Blk.& wh. warb..		a			Lark sparrow....	x		a	
Kingfisher.....		d			Gold-wing. warb.		d			Junco.....			a	e
Flicker.....		c			Tennessee warb.		d			Tree sparrow....			a	d
Red-head. woodp.	e				Nashville warb..		c			Chipping sparrow			c	
Yel-bel.sapsuck.	c				Parula warbler..		c			Field sparrow...			c	
Hairy woodpecker	d				Yellow warbler..		c			White-cr. spar..			d	
Downy woodpecker	c				Magnolia warbler		b			White-thr. spar.			a	
Kingbird.....		c			Cape May warbler		e			Fox sparrow.....			c	
Crested flycatch	c	d			Blk-thr.blue wbl		c			Lincoln's spar..			e	
Phoebe.....		d			Myrtle warbler..		a			Swamp sparrow...			d	
Yel-bel.flycatch		d			Blk-thr.gr.warb.		b			Song sparrow....			b	e
Acadian flycatch	e				Cerulean warbler		x			Snow bunting....			e	

KEY: R-Resident; T-Transient; S-Summer resident in or adjoining park;
W-Winter visitor. a- abundant; b - very common; c- common; d-
 uncommon; e- rare or irregular; x- recorded once, or accidental.



THE DELMAR EXPERIMENTAL FARM

Ruth Kern

When, on May 25, the S B C visited the N. Y. State Game Farm at Delmar, the temperature had dropped swiftly during the night and so sharp was the early morning wind as it skimmed over the duck ponds that it was hard to remember we were in the game-breeding season, and had been accorded the most unusual privilege of visiting the Farm at a time when it is normally closed to visitors. Superintendent Gardner Bump of the N. Y. State Conservation Department was our host.

Just as streams are stocked and kept supplied from fish hatcheries in the state, so are various types of wild life bred at the Game Farms for distribution throughout the various counties. Pheasants lead numerically -- over 50,000 eggs are collected annually, hatched in incubators, and, as one- to three-day chicks, shipped by mail. Some of these infants have even gone as far west as Utah, thumbing their way on planes before their own wings matured.

But if pheasants are the stock commodity, grouse are their specialty! The ruffed grouse -- remember how Audubon painted him! Many long, tedious, cold, cramping hours must have been spent by him and other naturalists, close by a drumming log, just to catch a few glimpses of the bird. Even then the beautiful penciling of the ruff beneath the head was omitted. But it was there for us to see as the males gave their locomotive calls, ending in that characteristic strutting pose. The birds become quite tame in captivity, and records show the egg count to have increased fivefold in many instances. Each egg is credited to a pair of birds, and pedigrees of five generations are available in many instances.

Mallard ducks have their breeding grounds there; and we saw a number of Canada geese. Two pairs on the far shore had their goslings with them; a third rose hissing from the nest to show six large eggs.

A day before the Germans moved in, two species of Norwegian birds including the black cock sailed out of the fjords for the Delmar farm where attempts are being made to breed a bird for our higher mountain regions, beyond the timber line. The top of Whiteface Mountain may some day be their home.

There is an experiment underway to determine the effects of starvation feeding on the fertility of pheasants, another on improved fur strains of muskrats, and still others on deer and hares.

We are very much indebted to Mr. Bump for a most interesting and instructive visit, and heartily endorse his invitation to others to visit the farm.

G-E Catbird....

To the list of birds of General Electric (FEATHERS, 1940, p. 57; 1941, p. 6, 14) can now be added still another. On May 13 a catbird was found within the main office building, either battered down or exhausted in its efforts to escape. It recuperated, and was liberated.

-- G.H.B.

No Phoebe....

The question was recently raised (FEATHERS, 1941, p. 12) as to whether or not a Niskayuna farm had lost its year-after-year phoebes. The answer has been obtained; there are no phoebes on that farm this year.

ANOTHER THRILL FOR A BIRD-HUNTER

J. M. Hollister

The June, 1940, issue of FEATHERS told of a thrill caused by observing a woodcock carrying its young in flight. The thrill last winter during my stay in Florida was not caused directly by a bird's action, but indirectly from photographing bird food.

For some unknown reason the birds were scarcer in the section where I was staying, and in addition the weather was cloudy. Everything was unfavorable for bird pictures in color. The next nest thing was to obtain pictures of what birds live on, such as butterflies, moths, grasshoppers, bugs, and spiders. The thrill came from a spider. I did not see a bird eat this particular species; but we do know that mockingbirds, catbirds, and wood thrushes do feed on spiders.

This species lives in the ground. In the front yard of the house where I was staying I observed these well-formed holes about $3/8$ " diameter. Knowing the holes were made by spiders, the first thing to do was to dig out a few specimens. They were from six to eight inches in the ground.

I kept a couple in a glass jar filled with earth for a month, and they dug new holes for my amusement. They were very considerate, by making the hole next to the glass so observation was possible at the bottom of the burrow.

A copy of Comstock's Spider Book was available, but I could not identify the species, so a specimen was mailed to the State Museum at Albany for identification. Word came back that they were not sure of the species, but had sent the specimen to a spider specialist at

the University of Rochester. Again word came back that they were not sure, but had sent the specimen to the University of Florida. The final answer is that Dr. Wallace of the Department of Biology of the University of Florida states that it was a new species, never having been described, but that he was preparing a description for publication. This was the thrill. As yet the spider has no official name but I call it the Tourist Spider.

STRANGE ADOPTION

George H. Bainbridge

It is not unusual to read of strange adoptions in animal life but to actually see one is not common. Two members of S B C recently saw one of these strange adoptions at Crandall's Game Farm in Connecticut. In this case a macaw has adopted a baby woodchuck about 8 inches long and almost as broad. When the woodchuck is allowed out of his box to roam on the grass, the macaw goes toward the woodchuck with a sideling movement covering the woodchuck with its tail and wing. Under a watchful eye, the macaw will permit humans to handle the woodchuck, but if the woodchuck squeals, the macaw assumes a hostile attitude. Several times the woodchuck wandered away from the macaw, and a collie dog on the place, with the usual dog antipathy for woodchucks, started for the little fellow, but was always met by a frontal attack from the macaw with spread wings and a wicked bill. The dog retreated every time seemingly aware of the fact that discretion is the better part of valor.

At this farm there will be found

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many interesting bird items. Among these are the black spur-winged African geese. This is a long-legged slender-bodied goose having a strong spur on the bend of the wing. This spur is normally not visible. Its function apparently is for fighting since it is only when the bird is in a pugnacious attacking attitude that the spur is clearly visible. According to Mr. Crandall, he is the only one ever to breed this species in the United States. In 1939 he raised eight (losing none) and again in 1940 he raised three (losing none). These younger birds are now paired off, and he is planning to raise more this year. They breed in August.

Among other birds at the farm are wood ducks, which also breed, two kinds of peacocks, flamingoes, a pair of Canada geese. While feeding the male Canada goose clover, he chatted away in great style apparently saying 'thanks' in the best goose manner. There are also at the farm some great horned owls. The peacocks put on a real display of tail fanning which seemed to be

the acme of vanity. When the peacocks decide to open up their vocal cords, they surely are vociferous. In addition to the birds mentioned, macaws and parrots add to the color and noise of the place. A tame crow with a limp also wanders around and greets one with a raucous 'Hello'.

Also on the farm are some foxes, a black bear, monkey, some colorful pheasants, and other unusual poultry. All in all, the farm is an interesting place, the Crandalls make one welcome, and there is no admission charge. For those who care to donate anything, there is a little box on the post for contributions. Mr. Crandall is a painter and right now so busy and unable to obtain help on the farm that he is head over heels in work trying to keep things in order, but a welcome awaits you.

Crandall's Game Farm is across the Thames River a short distance from New London. I shall gladly supply specific information to any wanting road directions.



NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF



Bird Records....

A card system has been started by the Records Committee, in which it is planned to keep a permanent record of the club members' yearly observations of birds. Such a method, it is believed, will not only simplify the work of recording the information but will make it easier to summarize the data for any particular species.

Besides arrival and departure dates, include in your reports an estimate of the number, general locality where found, if singing, or nesting, or any other bits of information about them that interest you.

By doing this the committee believes we can put a little more

life in the records than is possible with dates only.

It is also planned to clip from FEATHERS brief stories about birds and paste them on the cards to give our data about the species. So let us have your reports as soon as you can.

-- B. D. Miller

Worm-eating....

Each year an enjoyable trip is made to the Indian Ladder Ravine to listen and look for the worm-eating warbler. As the group neared the thick part of the woods May 11 the insect-like song could be heard as this modest and shy warbler was feeding in tops of trees which were in full leaf, making it impossible to find him. The bird has been seen regularly in recent years.-NVV

Big Nose Birds....

About twenty members of S B C accepted the invitation of the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club to join them in their annual trip to the ravine at Big Nose, a few miles west of Fonda, on Sunday, May 18, and enjoyed the fine day and good fellowship. Thirty-seven species of birds were observed, including a cedar waxwing, listed for the first time on a Big Nose trip. The brilliantly colored birds, scarlet tanagers, orioles, and rose-breasted grosbeaks, were most in evidence and several kinds of warblers were seen.

A vireo high in an elm tree was almost invisible among the new leaves although his calls and flutterings told us he was feeding there. A tree was found where the pileated woodpecker had recently been working.

The columbine was blooming earlier this year, and we found the fringed polygala in the deep woods where the large white trillium had faded. Dogwood and a yellow lady's slipper were seen on the steep side of the ravine. -- Viola Mabb

Berne....

A late May trip to Berne Swamp (FEATHERS, 1939, p.9) confirmed the records of breeding birds established on previous trips, included many additional species that were probably transients. White-throated sparrows were so concerned about the presence of the observers that their breeding there seemed certain. -- N.V.V.

Karner Prairies....

The annual Karner Road Memorial Day trip produced, as usual, the prairie warbler. The colony is certainly extending; not only are the singing males to be heard and seen along the road, and pairs of the birds observed, but hikes back from the road show the birds fully as numerous.

This year's Karner trip started with the finding of a hen pheasant with her numerous two- or three-day-old chicks. That they could hide under a leaf or in a tuft of dead grass was quickly demonstrated. Even when two of the chicks were uncovered, they remained "frozen." The nest of the chewink, one of the most common birds of that section, was also found. Most unexpected of the birds recorded on the trip - a high-flying duck hawk; most heard were towhee, field sparrow, chestnut-sided warbler, catbird, thrasher, jay, and chat. Canada and Nashville warblers are apparently among the summer residents there.

Orchard Again....

Again the orchard oriole is looking for a suitable nesting place in Guilderland Center. The beautiful male can easily be found as he spends much of his time singing from the topmost branch of a tree. On one day in mid-May three male and one female orchard orioles were seen; since then there are the pair. -- N.V.V.

Tame Birds....

The birds are now so tame that they feed in the yard while I'm busy out there with the flowers -- close enough to almost reach out and touch them.

A sparrow watched a grackle soak a piece of bread, so he also hopped up on the bird bath and "dunked" his, but did not seem to like it. A robin has developed a great liking for bread, and she goes for it like a child for candy.

Yesterday, while I was waiting for the bus, a robin uttered a warning to me to stand still, and swooped for a worm, not three feet away from me. -- Anna Dickerman

Rochester reported a European widgeon in the week of April 18, and a Bachmann's sparrow the week of April 25.

Protected, Shot....

Lured by a report of Bonaparte gulls the previous week, four S B C members went to Saratoga Lake the evening of May 1. They heard an alder flycatcher and saw a few ducks, a loon, and a horned grebe, but no gulls of any species. At the outlet of the lake, however, they saw a compact raft of waterfowl. While they were trying to identify the strangers, a shot was fired and the flock of 40 or more flew high over the water, circling wildly. Long black necks outstretched, white underparts gleaming in the sunset, they were spectacularly beautiful as they flew down the creek; and the watchers realized that they were having their first sight of American brant.

After the flock had gone it was observed that one brant had not risen with his comrades. With sorrow over the tragedy and with wrathful indignation at a so-called "sportsman" so depraved that he would shoot into a group of birds on the water, out of season, and a protected species rarely seen hereabouts at that, two amateur sleuths got busy. They felt sure that they had tracked the culprit and his victim to a nearby shack but before they could summon the game warden, smoke began to pour out of the chimney and there was an unmistakable odor of burnt feathers on the air.

-- Frances Reeves

...

The record of this locally rare small goose was probably the first in this vicinity in a decade; in late March and early April of 1930 there was a small flock of them on Watervliet Reservoir.

Berkshire Birds....

The Berkshire Museum, of Pittsfield, Mass., has newly published a "Field List of the Birds of Berkshire County, Massachusetts." The booklet, designed to fit inside Pe-

tersen's Field Guide to the Birds, gives the status of all Berkshire birds, and space is provided for the brief recording of notes. The booklet costs 25 cents, plus three cents postage. G. Bartlett Hendricks compiled the records.

Pittsfield Records....

Our booklet (see item above) is already out of date! Ludlow Griscom and party found our first definite ring-billed gull here April 20, and in May we have had two reports of prairie warblers. Neither record is unexpected; the warblers are found every year near Springfield. We have had more blue-winged warblers than in all previous years put together this spring. I understand that the Brewster's warbler (FEATHERS, 1940, p. 36) is back at the Sanctuary. Both blue-wings and golden-wings are there this year, so perhaps some more hybrids are in order. Our best find on our big trip to Ashley Falls May 18 was a male singing cerulean warbler. -- G. Bartlett Hendricks

White-throats....

May 5 was White-throated Sparrow Day in Schenectady. On Sunday, May 4, many were disappointed as only a few white-throats were heard. In the morning of May 5 the clear pervasive whistle of the hundreds of white-throats was heard from every park and many lawns. It was almost unbelievable that so many birds could arrive during one night and that they could disappear in about 24 hours. -- N.V.V.

William Tell, 1941....

There's a picture to prove it. A member of Schenectady Bowmen, local archer, shot an arrow into the air and it fell to earth he knew not where. At least it didn't hit the target at which he was aiming, on the range in Central Park.

He retrieved his arrow. On it was impaled a prairie horned lark.

FEATHERS

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VOL. 3, NO. 8

AUGUST, 1941

IN THE BERKSHIRES

Half Dozen S B C Members Participate in First Annual Week-end of Massachusetts Society, with List of 121 Species -- Greylock, Pittsfield, and Mount Everett Included in Territory

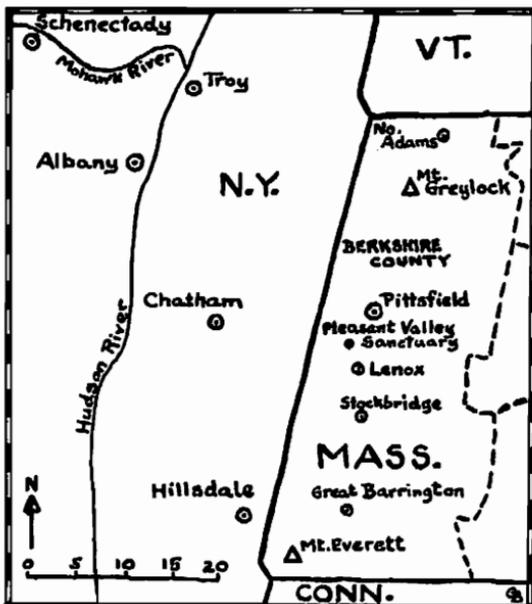
ANN BAINBRIDGE

The first annual Berkshire week-end of the Massachusetts Audubon Society was held in the Berkshires June 13, 14 and 15. The Schenectady Bird Club was fortunate indeed to be among those invited to the affair and the six members who attended had a most enjoyable time. The program beginning on Friday evening at the Berkshire Museum with an illustrated lecture and helpful talks by various members, was followed later that evening by an informal reception.

A definite schedule, well arranged and executed, included many interesting events. Those present divided into groups each of which had one or more competent leaders. Field trips beginning at 4, 6 and 8 a. m. on Saturday and lasting throughout the day yielded a surprising number of bird species. Pontoonuc Lake was first on the list for water birds. Then "Up Greylock!" was the cry. Because of previous rain and fog, the birds

very obligingly perched in the tops of dead trees where they preened and dried themselves whenever the sun broke through, meanwhile singing as though they were truly happy about the attention given them. With the foliage so luxuriant and well developed, this was indeed an unusual opportunity to study the birds and listen to their songs. The thrill on Greylock was perhaps a close-up view of the Bicknell's thrush; and later an olive-backed thrush, in full song, was something long to be remembered.

After lunch, a trip through an old CCC camp ground was rewarded by finding a pair of olive-sided flycatchers. Here indeed was an area well inhabited by many bird species. A little farther on -- Stony Ledge, a cool, inviting spot on this warm afternoon. Here the many "Ornithites" (apologies to Webster) rested and enjoyed a marvelous panorama of the surrounding territory.



FEATHERS

SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB

Annual Membership: Active, \$2; Assoc., \$1

Guy Bartlett, Editor, R.D. 1, Rosendale Road

Several stops were made en route to look and to listen. The chat and a lone white-crowned sparrow, the latter busily stowing away potato beetles, were the prizes.

A buffet breakfast was served at the park in the beautiful clearing near Guilder Pond, and was truly enjoyed by all. How delicious it all tasted! The inner man once more satisfied, Everett itself was invaded. A good road and well-traveled trails led quickly to the summit. The visibility was generally poor but now and then bright sunshine opened vistas of unusual grandeur. Several chewinks, cedar waxwings and hermit thrushes added interest to the trip. Someone was fortunate enough to see a turkey vulture.

Following Everett, was a trip to Bash-Bish Falls. Here the worm-eating warbler was the object of an intense search. This bird was finally discovered in New York just over the Massachusetts state line. No amount of coaxing or even general persuasion induced him to allow his name to be added to the already long Massachusetts list. He was positively a New Yorker! The large number (121) of species found in the two days' trip was consequent upon the divers ter-

Saturday evening an excellent dinner was served at the Pittsfield State Forest Log House. Here more than 100 pleasantly tired but hungry people assembled to satisfy the craving that only a day out-of-doors can create. This was an excellent opportunity for visiting to exchange the "finds" of the day and to check the bird list which totalled 111 species. After a leisurely dinner, many of the group drove to Berry Pond. Although there were few birds there, the drive was a delightful one in the cool of the evening, and all too soon threatening clouds hurried the members of the group to their various shelters for the night.

Again early Sunday morning cars left the Museum for Everett State Park. Thirty-three cars, each carrying an Audubon poster, were counted in the procession.

ritory from lowlands to mountain tops, thus embracing many of the Canadian zone birds.

At noon cars were headed for the Pleasant Valley Sanctuary where Dr. and Mrs. Wallace proved gracious hosts.

The outing was a most successful one and those from Schenectady hope next year will bring another invitation. Again we say "Thank you" and add praise and congratulations to those who helped make this first camp-out something long to be remembered.

Pied-billed grebe	Wood pewee	Blk.-thr. blue warbler
Green heron	Olive-sided flycatcher	Lyrle warbler
Blk.-cr. nt. heron	Prairie horned lark	Blk.-thr. green warbler
American bittern	Tree swallow	Blackburnian warbler
Least bittern	Bank swallow	Chestnut-sided warbler
Canada goose	Rough-winged swallow	Black-poll warbler
Mallard	Barn swallow	Pine warbler
Black duck	Cliff swallow	Oven-bird
Blue-winged teal	Blue jay	Northern water-thrush
Wood duck	Crow	Louisiana water-thrush
Turkey vulture	Blk-capped chickadee	Mourning warbler
Red-tailed hawk	Red-br. nuthatch	Northern yellow-throat
Red-shouldered hawk	Brown creeper	Yellow-breasted chat
Broad-winged hawk	House wren	Canada warbler
Marsh hawk	Winter wren	American redstart
Duck hawk	Long-b. marsh wren	English sparrow
Sparrow hawk	Short-b. marsh wren	Bobolink
Eastern ruffed grouse	Catbird	Meadowlark
Canada ruffed grouse	Brown thrasher	Red-wing
Virginia rail	Robin	Baltimore oriole
Florida gallinule	Wood thrush	Bronzed grackle
Killdeer	Hermit thrush	Cowbird
Spotted sandpiper	Olive-backed thrush	Scarlet tanager
Mourning dove	Bicknell's thrush	Rose-br. grosbeak
Yellow-billed cuckoo	Veery	Indigo bunting
Black-billed cuckoo	Bluebird	Purple finch
Whip-poor-will	Golden-cr. kinglet	Pine siskin
Nighthawk	Cedar waxwing	Goldfinch
Chimney swift	Starling	Towhee
Ruby-thr. hummingbird	Yellow-thr. vireo	Savannah sparrow
Kingfisher	Blue-headed vireo	Grasshopper sparrow
Flicker	Red-eyed vireo	Henslow's sparrow
Pileated woodpecker	Warbling vireo	Vesper sparrow
Sapsucker	Blk. & white warbler	Junco
Hairy woodpecker	Worm-eating warb. (NY)	Chipping sparrow
Downy woodpecker	Golden-winged warbler	Field sparrow
Kingbird	Blue-winged warbler	White-cr. sparrow
Crested flycatcher	Nashville warbler	White-thr. sparrow
Phoebe	Parula warbler	Swamp sparrow
Alder flycatcher	Yellow warbler	Song sparrow
Least flycatcher	Magnolia warbler	121 species, 1 subsp.

A DAY AT AUDUBON CAMP

Island Sanctuary Off Coast of Maine Has Plenty to Interest Bird and Nature Students -- Programs Are Varied; with Trips, Classes and Discussions Well Planned to Meet Desires of All

EDNA BECKER

"Oh, we're up in the morning at break of the day."

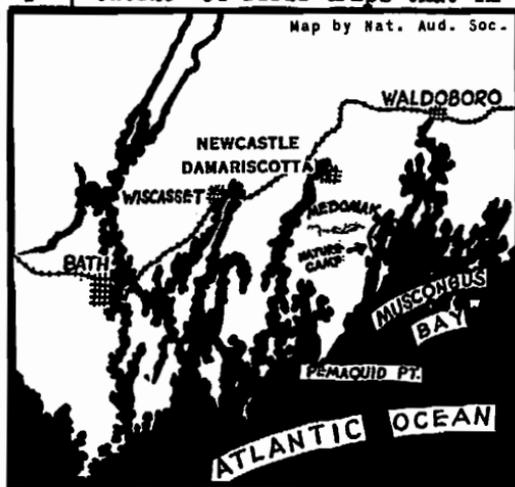
At least, so goes the song that Ailan Cruickshank's old-time accordian plays regularly as 6:30 rolls around. After having been in bed (lights out) by 10 o'clock the night before, you aren't too reluctant to "get those big feet on the ground." If it's your time to set table - that comes once a week - you'll have to hurry to be in the dining room by ten of seven. Breakfast is served on the dot of seven. All meals -- and everything else, too -- are run on schedule, and campers learn to be prompt. To miss out on any part of the diversified program would be too much of a disappointment for anyone, so we all get there.

"Typical Day"

I defy anyone to write about a "typical" day at the Audubon Camp since no two are ever alike. That's what makes Camp life so interesting. At breakfast we all listen eagerly for the announcement of the day's program. If it's to be one of those exciting trips to a bird island -- Otter Island where the great blue heronry is located; Old Hump Ledge,

where you have to watch each step to avoid crushing eggs or young of cormorants and gulls -- both herring and black-backed; or, most exciting of all, the all-day trip out to Little Green Island, on the verge of the open ocean. Here nest Leach's petrels, gullilemots, laughing gulls and terns. The sole inhabitant, a fisherman, gives one a close-up of Maine's interesting lobster industry. You might even get one of the cork floats to bring back for use as a candlestick.

Sundays are not typical -- in that there are no scheduled classes -- but everyone is so eager for a little more of the routine of field trips that im-



prompt ones are quickly organized. The first Sunday, June 15, got off to a start not too favorable according to our prediction (It was my turn, along with three others, to use the weather facts we had learned the day before in Nature activities class to forecast the weather for the day). In spite of our "probably rain" prediction, the day's activities were most enjoyable. The morning was spent birding on Hog Island. Since this is a spruce forest type of habitat, it is an excellent place to study warblers. Mr. Joseph Cadbury was very helpful by giving us catch phrases and descriptions which helped greatly in our attempts to differentiate between the songs of the various species. Here are some of the notes I took on that particular trip:

Catch Phrases

Redstart - "chewy, chewy, chewy, chew, chew, chew"

Parula warbler - buzzy note

Magnolia warbler -- "weety, weety, weeteo"

Black-throated green warbler - two songs: "trees, trees, murmuring trees"; "dee, dee, dee, dee, dee", "dee"

Myrtle warbler - sweet trill

Junco - trill (of tinkling bells)

Blackburnian warbler - "s,leet s,leet, s,leet, s,leet" Faint, high, out of range of some people's hearing; lisping sound; high, especially at end

Golden-crowned kinglet - ascending, wiry, ends in chatter

Olive-backed thrush - spirals up (veery spirals down)

Nashville warbler -- "chip,

chip, chip, chip, chipper, chipper, chipper"

Botanical Notes

In the afternoon we all went to the mainland, near Friendship. Here again impromptu groupings were set up, and this was my only Botany trip of the session. Notes, taken at random, include the following:

Lady fern -- crescent sori
New York fern - fronds taper at both ends

Hay-scented fern - hairy stem; smell of dried hay

Marsh fern - twist in rachis

Crested shield fern - leaves quite horizontal

Mountain maple - only maple with upright flowers

Gray birch - dead underbranches; can't stand its own shade

Gaylussacia - huckleberry; 10 seeds, dark blue-black

Vaccinium - blueberry; indefinite number of seeds, light blue

Luminous moss -- a rarity; found in caves; reflects light; a startlingly bright green when observed at the right angle.

Numerous Habitats

Although this particular day omitted my optional line of study, Marine Life, it was one of the very few days which did not include study of one of the following habitats:

Rocky shore - here we were introduced to steamed mussels

Mud flat - included a steamed clam party

Tide pool - one of the most colorful and interesting sights imaginable

FEATHERS

Life on the Float - the sea anemones and sponges were especially lovely

Seaweed (kelp) - brought in from deep water.

In the Evening

Evenings were as varied as the days. A "typical" one might be a lecture, a work evening (spent with the instructor in one's chosen subject; partly lecture, partly study, with the day's "finds" on display for observation at close range), a free evening, or perhaps some bird movies.

Without exception, I believe the two weeks spent at Audubon Nature Camp were at once the most enjoyable and worthwhile ones I have ever spent. "Never a dull moment" certainly holds good there, and yet there is enough free time so you do not feel rushed. The surprising thing is that you can learn so many interesting and useful facts without any effort, because it is all just a lot of fun.

CARP OR DUCKS

Carp play an important role in waterfowl feeding grounds, and to some degree are responsible for decreases in duck population in certain areas, says the N. Y. Conservation Department.

That a definite relationship exists between carp and waterfowl seems to be borne out by studies conducted on Cranberry Lake, Round Pond, and Buck Pond on the edge of Lake Ontario, in Monroe County. About 11 years

ago these waters annually produced several broods of ducks and also furnished considerable duck hunting in the fall.

Shortly after this time a marked decrease in the number of breeding ducks was noted and was largely attributed to the increased fishing, boating and swimming by summer vacationists in the area. However, investigators and persons familiar with hunting and fishing conditions in these waters believed that other factors were at work and decided to delve deeper into the duck problem.

Prior to the falling off in duck populations, extensive beds of wild celery, sago pondweed, and waterweed, as well as other aquatic vegetation were present in these waters. Carp, which had inhabited the waters for several years showed a sharp increase in numbers about the same time that decreases in waterfowl populations were noted. Along with the carp increase, extensive aquatic food beds disappeared and the waters became very muddy.

Recent observations revealed that the waters are still very muddy and that only a few stunted patches of sago pondweed, coontail, and waterweed are present. Research investigators say that these facts at least offer a partial answer to the question why duck populations are decreasing in this particular area.

Incidentally, both carp and muddy water are to be found in the vicinity of Schenectady.

NESTING WITH DIFFICULTY

BARRINGTON S. HAVENS

One of the rather unusual species recorded in the Vale Cemetery during the past winter was the horned lark. As the winter season drew to its close, the records became more frequent, and the birds were more often noted in a single locality: the Catholic Cemetery immediately below Brandywine Avenue.

It soon became apparent that a pair of horned larks was probably breeding in that section. One or two birds were regularly seen or heard in the same place; efforts were made to find a nest, but without success.

Junior Naturalists

It remained for the youngsters of the neighborhood, who used the vacant lot behind Brandywine Avenue as a playground, to locate the nest with the unerring facility of childhood. On June 14 a number of children were observed clustered about a single spot studying something, and investigation disclosed that it was the nest of a bird. By watching for the parent, it quickly became obvious that this was indeed the nest of a horned lark.

The bird would have been hard put to it to find a more difficult locality to raise its young. The nest was in almost plain sight at one side of a small hummock of grass, in the middle of the play area of the neighborhood children and not

far from a roadway over which many people drive to and fro regularly in order to reach the various cemetery graves. Once the nest was discovered and watched, it could be easily seen that children spent more time near it than away from it. How the parent birds found any opportunity to protect and feed the young was difficult to understand.

Foster-parents

As a matter of fact, the larks had already had their troubles. Judging from the accounts of various children who were familiar with the nest, it had been discovered almost immediately it was made. Four eggs were laid in it, according to the usual lark custom, but not all were allowed to hatch. The children handled the eggs and one was broken. The three remaining hatched on June 12 or 13, whereupon one enterprising boy took all the unfledged birds home with him. Whether his parents or his good judgment prevailed is not sure, but he returned the birds to the nest -- but not before one of them had died.

This was the situation when the writer found the nest. The young were still in the downy stage, without real feathers. The children had been leaving bread crumbs near the nest, in the hope that the birds would feed on the bread, but this had the effect of attracting star-

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lings to the neighborhood, adding another hazard and labor to the duties of the adult larks, who spent considerable time in chasing the starlings away.

Less Molestation

At this juncture some judicious and tactful education was passed along to Young America, in the hope that they would at least give the older birds an opportunity to raise their young with a minimum of further molestation.

An improvement resulted. Some of the children constituted themselves as guardians of the nest, and they even went so far as to place cardboard and paper coverings over it when rain threatened. One morning a piece of cardboard was found to have soaked up and flattened down over the nest to such an extent that it was almost sealed up -- but an adult lark flew out from under the cardboard when the nest was approached.

By this time it became evident that the young birds had little chance of reaching maturity. After four or five days they were still in the downy stage, and despite efforts at childhood education the nest still received regular attention from children.

On the evening of June 18 the birds were still in the nest, downy and clamoring weakly for food. On the next morning they were gone. What happened to them is still a mystery. None of the children seems to know -- or cares to tell.

RANDOM NOTES

Since 1920 the Bureau of Biological Survey has banded more than 3,000,000 birds.

-o-

America's first wildlife sanctuary was established in 1903. Expanded rapidly since 1934, when there were 104 refuges, the system today includes 266 national refuges comprising 13,500,000 acres. There are 178 refuges for waterfowl, 50 for colonial birds, 26 for wildlife in general, and 12 for big game.

-o-

Twenty-two trained and vigilant Audubon wardens are patrolling more than 3,500,000 acres in wildlife sanctuary areas under the control and guardianship of the National Audubon Society.

-o-

Hope for the survival of the ivory-billed woodpecker grows slimmer. One of its last two strongholds is vanishing; the South Carolina area is being lumbered preparatory to impounding the Santee-Cooper reservoir. Acquisition of the Singer tract in Louisiana, the remaining stronghold, is being recommended

-o-

The California condor is credited with the ability of attaining a soaring height beyond 30,000 feet.

-o-

There may be as few as 80 or as many as 200 whooping cranes still in existence. It is a retiring bird, living as remotely as possible from man. On the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, southeastern Texas, an increase in crane population has been reported -- from 22 to 26.

THE SEASON - SPRING, 1941

B. D. MILLER

If our spirits rise and fall with the barometer, as is generally believed, its fluctuations probably affect the lives of birds to a corresponding degree. At least, the weather (a product of barometric changes) during migrations and nesting periods is known to be a big factor in their lives.

High winds, sleet, heavy snows and long rains while birds are migrating often reduce their numbers enormously, and probably explain why even casual observers often notice yearly increases or decreases in the bird populations of their localities. We hear this claim made for such common species as the robin and bluebird. Long, cold rains during and shortly after the incubation period of the ruffed grouse and other ground-nesting birds largely determine their mortality rate, in the opinion of many, for that period.

Prosperous Year

Therefore, after reviewing the weather prevailing here during the spring and early summer of 1941, we predict a prosperous year for the local birds. After a uniformly cold but not severe winter, with no heavy snows or sleet storms, one of the warmest and driest springs in our history followed. By April 20 the thermometer had reached temperatures of 88 to 93 degrees. Such weather, to the ominous concern

of farmers and gardeners, has continued to mid-July. "Have you ever seen so many thrushes and robins?" and similar remarks now heard may be explained by this weather.

Records are kept for all the birds reported for this area. They are available to anyone interested, but in the summaries for FEATHERS we will give you only the unusual or rare reports that are of more interest than the "mine run" of birds whose arrivals and departures are about as regular as the seasons. If they are not on schedule, at least we can't blame the administration for their apparent irregularity.

Noteworthy Records

Notable were 50 American brant on May 1 at the north end of Saratoga Lake. Although this is not an early date, it is a large number of rare transients to be seen at one time. They were reported by a party consisting of Misses Caldwell, Holmes, Reeves, and VanVorst.

On May 13 P. S. Miller reported a pair of yellow-billed cuckoos in Scotia. Others had heard their call about a week previously, which might have made it an early date, but Mr. Miller was unable to identify them until the 13th. He suspected they were preparing to nest nearby. This is a very interesting bird

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for anyone to see or hear. Their diet of spiny caterpillars and their shy habits are surprising.

The double-crested cormorant reported by C. N. Moore on May 11 sounds almost as rare to some of us as the dodo bird.

On May 4 George Bainbridge reported two mourning warblers in Central Park. The next report of this rare warbler is from B. S. Havens, in Vale Cemetery on May 18.

The red crossbills have again been found by Mr. Havens in Vale Cemetery. On April 8 he reported 15 birds there; and 10 again on the 21st.

A small flock of pine siskins spent several days in Vale Cemetery during March. Mr. Havens reported them there almost daily from the 6th to 28th. Two to a

dozen birds were counted daily.

Not a spring bird, but one already arrived at the time of writing, is the American egret. Five were reported at the Miskayuna wide waters on July 4 by Misses Abel and VanVorst.

Miss VanVorst again reports the orchard oriole along Black Creek at Guilderland Center. She thinks they nest there.

In an almost daily check on the bird life in Vale Cemetery for the first half of 1941, Mr. Havens has identified 90 species. Several, such as the green heron, spotted sandpiper, killdeer, horned lark, rose-breasted grosbeak, indigo bunting, red crossbills, and over a score of warblers, are surprising visitors to the heart of a city. His six-page detailed report is available to anyone interested in the dates and counts.



NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF

Breeding Wood Ducks....

To see one family of wood ducks with thirteen children swimming and feeding in the shallow water of the Watervliet reservoir was a treat. While standing on the bridge watching the graceful killdeer on the mud flats and an occasional spotted sandpiper feeding along the shore, a second family of wood ducks appeared, and before many minutes had passed a third family of much larger ducklings walked out of the weeds and swam upstream near the others. It

would seem that the wood ducks are increasing in local areas.

-- N.V.V.

Peaceful Robin

A robin is usually belligerent aplenty in the territory of its nest, and woe to the other robin trespassing. A lilac bush in Miskayuna shows that a robin can be at peace with its neighbors, however.

Before the warblers had arrived, a robin built its nest in this lilac, and before the end of April had four eggs.

Mid-May found the warblers back, whereupon a redstart built in the same lilac, as in previous years, and had eggs before the end of the month. The nest, incidentally, is composed of Kleenex to some extent, it having been observed that the female redstart was trying unsuccessfully to tear a piece of it into shreds -- a sprinkling of shredded Kleenex on the ground quickly disappeared into the construction of the nest. So much for that -- to continue with the story, no animosity toward the redstart on the part of the robin was observed, although robin and redstart nests were within five feet of each other.

In a nearby locust were nests of a robin, crested flycatcher, and a song sparrow.

There is a concentration of bird nests in an acre and a half around the house -- three chipping, five song sparrow, six robin, three oriole, one crested flycatcher, three redstart, one warbling vireo, and probably a hummingbird; not to mention two starling nests. And several other species are known to nest along the edge of adjoining woods and marshy land. -- G.B.

Nesting Material

And, speaking of the redstart using Kleenex tissue for nest-building, maybe there's a germ of an idea in other birds making use of the same material. Orioles, yellow warblers, vireos, and wood thrushes are among the species which frequently help themselves to supplies of string and shredded cloth, and to paper. Try it next season, tearing or shredding the tissue.

White Preferred

Reference in the preceding item to orioles using string in their nests brings up the observations:

A pair of Baltimore orioles have built their nest for two years of gaily colored yarns, of yellows and pink. When the 1941 season opened a dainty green yarn and some dingy darning cotton were offered to Lady Oriole. Much to the surprise of the donors she would not accept one piece of the green but used white cord and the darning cotton. -- M.V.V.

Crescent Egrets

American egrets were here at least by July 4. Five of them were seen that day in the usual Crescent Lake section by Misses Abel and VanVorst. and they had reports of the birds having arrived in that section about two weeks earlier.

Stockport Egrets

On June 20 at the usual location above Stockport, on the east side of the Hudson below Albany there was a group of 14 American egrets. How much earlier they arrived in the section is a question; the observer had not been there previously this season.

Watching the Hudson from a train that day, it was very noticeable that ducks were more commonly seen than in other recent summers. In the vicinity of Germantown particularly were numerous families of ducks seen. They were, of course, mostly blacks, but mallards were seen.

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Unexpected

And, speaking of breeding ducks (referring back to both the wood ducks on Watervliet Reservoir and the various ones along the Hudson) the Crescent Lake section also had its young this season. Now they seem to be also established on the bay of the mouth of the Lisha Kill. On June 10 a black duck with her family of seven downy urchins was in the Lisha itself at dusk, right beside a back-yard garden. The young proved that, although they could not fly, they could make themselves scarce in a hurry. And they stayed concealed along the banks all the while the parent duck cried back in the woods to which she flew when a dog surprised the flock in his own back yard.

Bald-headed Grosbeak ...

Apropos the recent item about birds so marked they are easily recognized at feeders (p. 35) we have a report from George Bainbridge of a "bald-headed" male evening grosbeak at his feeder regularly two winters ago, not to mention a one-legged starling.

Sleeping Robin

Walk up quietly to a robin nest at night and snap on a flashlight. The chances are you will find the parent bird asleep with her head tucked under her wing. And, if the young are pretty well grown, the chances are also that the adult bird will be perched on the edge of the nest, with her breast extending over the young. On the

other hand, maybe your investigation will show the bird asleep with bill resting on the edge of the nest -- they're to be seen both ways, but generally as mentioned first.

Local La Brea Pits

California is famous for, among other things, its noteworthy asphalt pits at La Brea, in Los Angeles. Prehistoric animals and birds of many kinds have been found in them.

Locally there has been a miniature asphalt pit miring. It was May 7, with the temperature 85, and hotter in the sun. Along the edge of one of the county's asphalt roads was a fluttering object -- and it was too early in the season for tiger swallowtail butterflies. A setter was on the scene, nosing the object, and more than mildly curious; thereupon an investigation.

There at the edge of the road was a male goldfinch, flat on the ground with wildly fluttering wings. It was thought at first the bird had been knocked down by an automobile, but the bird could not be lifted. It was necessary to cut away a piece of the still-soft asphalt before the goldfinch could be removed. The bird had apparently walked on the asphalt, had been trapped by it, and had gone in deeper and deeper until its entire abdomen and breast, its tail, and its bill were likewise adhering.

Upland Plovers

Upland plovers are to be seen in at least two of the usual

places this year. Several S B C members have seen them in numbers at the usual South Schenectady location, and W. R. Steele has reported them from the Sacandaga Road site.

A Wave

Various S B C observers reported the same fact -- that there was a decided wave of migrants May 6 and 7, with orioles, grosbeaks, and warblers particularly in evidence.

Non-breeders?

There must be plenty of non-breeding grackles and starlings in this vicinity, or else the males of both species stay away from the nests. Each evening in the spring witnessed the birds flying along the Mohawk toward the Nischolm section by the hundreds, and as the season progressed the flocks increased in size.

Schoharie Preserve

The state conservation department has rented a large tract of land in the Schoharie Valley to be set aside as a "game preserve" and restricted hunting area. The tract lies between Middleburg and Route 20 at Sloansville, and includes all lands around Schoharie and Central Bridge.

More Savannahs

Have you noticed an increased abundance of savannah sparrows this year as compared with 1940? Last year, in common with most other summer sections, Schenec-

tady's savannah population was sadly depleted; the birds have staged a come-back.

Ruddy Stamp

The 1941 migratory bird-hunting permit revenue \$1 stamp, now on sale, illustrates a pair of ruddy ducks and their brood at the edge of a pond. It is from a painting by E. R. Kalmbach of the U. S. Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service.

Every Five Years

It looks as though one Niskayuna site offers the possibility of records of whip-poor-wills every five years. In early May of 1936 they were in that section a few days; in early May of this year the birds were once more heard there.

Ridge Road again this year also produced whip-poor-will records, as did the more customary locations.

Urban Whip-poor-will ...

The previous item brings up the record established by R. H. Rogers at his home in the Corlher Heights section. At six o'clock in the morning in late July he looked through the screen door and saw a whip-poor-will resting on his front porch.

Doomed Perigrines

The perigrine falcons along the coast of Britain, so like the duck hawks of this country, seem doomed. They are, of course, bird-eaters; and they are blamed, probably correctly, for the loss of carrier pigeons

FEATHERS

used by R. A. F. patrol fliers from out over the sea to land bases. Official hunters have been told to destroy the nests and shoot the hawks.

Says The Gazette

In early July our local contemporary, The Schenectady Gazette, ran the following as a fashion note:

"More feather hats, and more birds trimming hats, for late summer and early fall. Even the humming bird will contribute his plumage."

Maybe so, but not according to the law; particularly since the recent feather campaign was nationally, and in this state, so successful. Maybe, however, they know how to make rooster feathers look like hummingbirds; clever birds, these milliners.

New Book

A FIELD GUIDE TO WESTERN BIRDS, by Roger Tory Peterson; National Audubon Society, \$2.75. A companion book to the widely used book by the same author for the East.

Pittsfield G-E Birds...

We've been carrying numerous items about birds found within the confines of the Schenectady General Electric plant. Now we note a bird at Pittsfield, Mass.

The Pittsfield G-E Works News recently had an account of the works photographer endeavoring to photograph a "hawk" nesting on the roof of its Building 24, sometime in early June. The photographer was unsuccessful.

Yes, probably a nighthawk.

Fast Traveling

Migrating birds often do some fast traveling. Records in the files of the Fish and Wildlife Service, as compiled by May Thacher Cooke, show at least 550 miles in two days by a mallard, banded at the Locreek National Wildlife Refuge, S. Dak., on October 17, 1938, and recovered two days later near Pawhuska, Okla. Another mallard, banded at Locreek October 18, was shot two days later near Carmen, Okla., 510 miles away.

Food for Crows

Evidently a pair of crows bred in the Vale Cemetery this year. At any rate, they were observed there regularly; and on the morning of June 30 some seven of the species were gathered together in one or two trees, making a great clamor.

Most of the birds seemed to be immature crows, calling hungrily for attention from the adults and flapping their wings as young birds do. At least two of the crows had what seemed to be food in their mouths, and this tempted the observer to go nearer in order to see what it was.

In the birds' excitement getting away to another and more distant tree, one dropped its food. This developed, upon examination, to be a tiny rabbit about four inches long. The head had been torn off.

While the crows continued their outcry a little distance away, a mature rabbit was seen near the spot where the young one had been dropped. It retreated a slight distance and then stopped, watching the ob-

server. As the observer moved toward it, the rabbit circled back toward the spot where the young one had been dropped from the tree.

Evidently the crows had caught the young rabbit in that vicinity, and the older one may have been on the watch to prevent any marauder from getting the remainder of its litter. -- B.S.H.

June Cuckoo Nest

Although it is generally known that cuckoos are breeding summer residents in our locality, it is not often that the nests are actually observed. In mid-June, on the 14th to be exact, Benton Seguin found a nest of the black-billed cuckoo, with five eggs. It was in the Mariaville area.

Death by Fire

Several dead white-throated sparrows were found on Mt. McGregor in early May. Some were recovered by the men attending the sprinklers or mowing the lawn, and turned over to Dorothy Caldwell. She in turn forwarded them to C. B. Worth of the Department of Zoology at Swarthmore College for examination.

In her letter of transmittal she mentioned an extensive fire in the valley two days earlier.

The examination at Swarthmore showed the presence of pneumonitis, and the comment was made that it would have been possible for smoke or fire to produce the condition.

Among Local Authors

The Auk, July, contains the first part of a report on "Annu-

al Cycle of the Black-capped Chickadee" by Eugene P. Odum, presenting a study of the chickadee during one complete annual cycle, as part of the writer's research program during 1939-40 at the Edmund Niles Huyok Preserve, Rensselaerville.

Dr. Dayton Stoner of the N. Y. State Museum, Albany, is author of "Homing Instinct in the Bank Swallow" in the July issue of Bird-Banding. From the records of returns it appears that homing instinct is not developed to a pronounced degree in the young and does not become dominant or function to fullest extent in the individual until it has once nested.

The July issue of Topics, publication of the Schenectady Museum, has an article by Barrington S. Havens, "The Birds Are Back Again." Accompanying the text is a Conservation Department map showing the New York State flyways.

Dorothy Caldwell is the first to have written an article in FLYWAYS that has been listed in the columns of the major publications. Her April paper on "Some Studies of Winter Bird Populations" is listed in the Wilson Bulletin of June.

Flocked Doves

Both the earliness of the observation and size of the flock were commented upon by one S B C observer who, in late July, saw between 50 and 60 mourning doves traveling as a unit. For three or four days they stayed in one section.

New Publications

Available from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington:

"Food Habits of the American Coot with Notes on Distribution" Bur. of Biolog. Survey, Wildlife Research Bulletin 2; 25 cents. 52 pages, illustrated, including colored plate.

"Wildlife Management through Soil Conservation on Farms in the Northeast." Farmers' Bulletin 1868; 10 cents. 53 p. 11.

"Wildlife of the Atlantic Coast Salt Marshes." Fish and Wildlife Circular 11; 15 cents. 32 p. 11. pl.

"Choose a Book about Things to Be Conserved." Education Office, Leaflet 60; 5 cents. 19 p. 11.

A list of books for children to read, pertaining to wild animals, snakes, forests, rocks, minerals, soil, insects, and wild flowers.

Heresy

Have you noticed how, when swallows are collected by the scores if not hundreds on overhead wires that they almost always face in the same direction? This is particularly true if the day is breezy, or windy. And it is into the wind they generally face.

On a quiet day, however, it is often to be noted that swallows on opposite wires face in opposite directions, so they face each other.

It's not, of course, strictly true that all face uniformly but the exceptions are few.

One observer recently counted 74 in one wire-flocked group of barn swallows. Only three faced away from the wind.

This & That

H. V. D. Allen, S B C member who spoke at the April meeting, was the leader of the club's trip into the black-crowned night heronry May 17, and was the speaker two nights previous at a meeting of the Alplaus Parent-Teachers' Association, on the subject of local birds.

-o-

We have spoken before of the threatened open season for wood ducks (p. 36). Your telegram or letter at once to Hon. Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior Washington, D. C., with copy by mail to Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Chief, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., urging no open season on wood duck is decidedly in order.

-o-

Records of the pine siskin at Buffalo on June 28, unusually early, bring forth a comment by The Crotonotary, of the Buffalo Ornithological Society, that the species is extremely erratic in its nesting, sometimes laying in March or April. When they do nest early (as they very likely did this year, since early April was so warm) they are also early in wandering southward.

-o-

A new use for electricity has been reported by Skagit County, Wash., farmers by whom much garden seed is produced. Cabbage plants must be left through the winter in the ground, affording luscious green feed for lots of wild ducks. A battery of revolving floodlights was found to keep ducks away at night, at least while the idea was new.

Easier than shooting, too.

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BIRDS IN YOUR GARDEN

Laurence B. Fletcher, New England Authority,
to Speak at October Meeting on Importance
of Birds around the Home, and Show Slow
Motion Pictures of Hummingbirds

October 15 - Nott Terrace High School

Laurence B. Fletcher -- President of the Northeastern Bird-banding Association, Secretary of The Federation of Bird Clubs of New England, and Secretary of the Trustees of Public Reservations in Massachusetts -- will be the speaker at the October meeting of The Schenectady Bird Club, at 8 o'clock in the auditorium of Nott Terrace High School on Wednesday, October 15.

Mr. Fletcher's talk will include the topics of the importance of birds to the garden; some results of six years' bird-banding; and the life history and migration of the hummingbird, with slow colored motion pictures. It is a talk that should appeal not only to S B C members but also to garden and women's clubs and to all organizations interested in outdoor life. In addition to the motion pictures there are also colored lantern slides, featuring the economic value of birds, with interesting views of their activities and some of the astounding facts brought to light through the medium of bird-banding. The speaker has for years been

active in the study and banding of birds and in the conservation of all wild life.

In the past, all S B C members have been given tickets to all meetings. The Club is operating on a minimum budget, however, and two outside speakers -- Mr. Cruickshank and Dr. Allen -- have already been here on the 1941-42 schedule. No lecture has ever shown a profit; and the budget is not sufficient for many such talks without some additional help. There will be a charge for this meeting -- 25 cents for S B C members, and 35 cents for others.

It has been particularly asked by the Program Chairman, Mrs. Chester N. Moore, that all members endeavor to interest several others in attending the lecture. There will be plenty of room in the auditorium, and a large ticket sale is needed if the club is to continue holding such meetings. An early sale of the tickets will be particularly helpful to the committee in completing its arrangements for the meeting.

A DAY AT THE ROGERS NATURE CAMP AT ELK LAKE

Dorothy A. Rowley & Idella M. Heacox

A whistle announcing "You have to get up -- you've got to get up" sounds through the hall. No, it isn't the army; just 6:30 a.m. at Elk Lake Nature Camp. The day is just beginning for us, but it started some time earlier for the birds. A red-eyed vireo has been singing for an hour outside our window -- we call him the camp mascot for he sings all day long. A short distance away, the olive-backed thrush is pouring out his spiral melody, maintaining his reputation as the earliest, latest, and most constant singer of the vicinity, as we never stir far without hearing his lovely song.

After a huge breakfast, which should take care of our needs for all day but doesn't, half of us start for a walk along the Marcy Trail. Before we leave the porch, the chirping sparrow makes his presence known; a bit farther away Papa Robin is flying back and forth across a miniature bay, busily getting food for his new family; in the thicket nearby, the "camp" redstart sings; a purple finch gives advice to his babies from the nearest hemlock; and Mr. and Mrs. Cedar Waxwing give flying lessons from the top of Mt. Tom. The morning is well started.

We walk along the trail at a snail's pace, stopping at the slightest movement or sound and gathering a vast fund of information from Charles H. Rogers about frogs, toads, efts, squirrels, etc., but

mostly about birds. Our questions about botany we save for Mrs. Rogers who is with the other group, paddling up the lake to meet us at Marcy Landing. A scarlet tanager, singing lustily, halts us for several minutes while all get good views of him; a little farther along, we are fortunate enough to see and hear a bay-breasted warbler and, almost to the landing, we pause to hear a de luxe concert given by a winter wren and hermit thrush. This entrancing moment is broken by the dash across our path of a young buck, startled by the approach of the canoes. We exchange experiences and find that they were lucky enough to chance upon an otter at home, breakfasting on a frog and busily engaged in scratching himself between bites. Despite the green handkerchief, which they tied on his doorknob, we search bay after bay in vain for his hideout.

A Big Family

Instead, quite unexpectedly Mr. Rogers' glasses pick up Mrs. American Merganser and her brood, hugging the shove very closely. After following her around two points, we use the two canoes in pincer formation and corner her in a narrow bay, getting wonderful close-ups and approaching within fifteen feet before she takes fright and skitters off, followed by her entire family of twenty-three, one of whom almost gets left behind and earns the name of "Dopey" in his frantic efforts to catch

WAS IT A GRAY-CHEEKED?

Barrington S. Havens

Bird song is a fascinating subject to study. The more one learns, the more one's interest grows; there's always something further to excite one's interest.

It seems that all song students eventually run into more or less difficulty with the songs of the thrushes. Mr. H. V. D. Allen has written about this (FEATHERS, 1940, p. 29). The writer also has been quietly pursuing his researches along similar lines, although using a different method of notation.

The missing link up to the present in my lexicon of the thrush songs is that of the gray-cheeked thrush. The robin and bluebird are simple; the wood thrush is easy. More difficulty is presented with the genus *Hyllocichla*, which includes the veery, olive-backed, and gray-cheeked/Bicknell species.

All of the *hyllocichlae* evidently have a similarity in quality or voice. The olive-backed thrush, which seems to sing a sort of reverse veery song, is quite distinctive. The veery, too, would be easily recognized were it not for the disturbing fact that Saun-

ders mentions certain similarities between its song and that of the gray-cheeked thrush. Saunders says that, from his experience, the gray-cheeked sings almost the same song as that of the veery, except that the gray-cheeked interpolates lower notes between the "ree-ah" phrases.

Keeping this in mind, the writer has for the past few years kept his ears alert to note any unusual veery songs. On the morning of May 27, on the way down through Vale Cemetery, a song was heard which at first was identified as that of a veery and then, on second and closer hearing, was thrown open to question.

With Lower Notes

This odd veery song started with two low notes, followed by two "ree-ah" phrases, carried on with two more low notes, and ended with two more "ree-ah" phrases. It was much fainter than the song of any veery I have ever heard, and I was quite close to the bird (although I could not see it). At no time did I hear any of the customary "veery" notes of the veery. To this summary may be added the admittedly inconclusive fact that very few veeries have been recorded in the Vale Cemetery on recent trips. I strongly suspect I heard a gray-cheeked thrush. Without the additional benefit of a sight identification, however, it is, of course, obviously impossible to draw any definite conclusions as to the bird's identity.

FEATHERS
 SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB
 Annual Membership: Active, \$2; Assoc., \$1
 Guy Bartlett, Editor, R.D.1, Rosendale Road

EGRETS ALONG THE HUDSON

Nelle Van Vorst

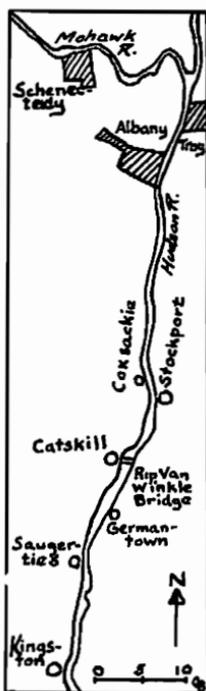
After reading a recent item by Dr. Dayton Stoner (See Wilson Bulletin, March, 1941, p. 41), we were very anxious to make a trip on the Hudson River Day Boat as far as Kingston Point to see the egrets. On August 2 we left Albany at 9:20 a. m. to try our luck.

As we steamed down the river from the city we were soon eagerly watching the east shore, which was beautifully outlined with purple loosestrife. A sandpiper flying low from the sandy shore, a swallow sweeping close to the water, a kingfisher diving from his perch, and a great blue heron standing motionless all presented a natural motion picture as we focused our binoculars on the shore.

Eagle, and Cormorant

The tedium of waiting for the first glimpse of the egrets was broken by the sight of an eagle soaring over the tree tops, a cormorant flapping slowly up the river, and several ducks rising from hidden ponds.

As we approached the marshes north of Stockport many blue herons were seen. The first egret spied presented an entirely different picture than we expected; he was perched in



a tree overhanging the water. Soon several small groups were seen feeding on the shore.

Passing Stockport, with Rip Van Winkle Bridge in the distance, we saw about forty egrets in the marshes, and an occasional one flying over the mass of cattails and loosestrife.

After we docked at Kingston Point we expected the time to be spent in enjoying our lunch and then waiting for the boat, but to our surprise the time was too short. We were lured away from our picnic table by many small birds in a pine grove. As we watched the pine and the black and white warblers, redstarts, red-eyed vireos, and yellow warblers in the grove and along the brook, we suddenly realized that the veery was calling in the distance.

At High Tide

The return trip was just as fascinating, as the shore presented a very different condition since it was high tide. All the egrets were roosting in trees near their feeding grounds.

To anyone interested in a day of quiet and different birding in the late summer, I highly recommend this trip.

NEW FACTS ABOUT THRASHERS

The male and female brown thrasher are practically identical in appearance but, if there is a difference, it is the female which is more vividly colored. The chief difference is in the breast streakings -- the female usually having more prominent ones than the male. This is one of the conclusions reached by Edna Becker, S B C member who spoke at the September meeting of the Club on "The Life History of the Brown Thrasher." Miss Becker, of the faculty of Hollins College in Virginia, recently prepared a thesis on this subject in connection with work toward an M. S. degree at Cornell University. A detailed summary of her observations has been published in *The Raven*, the bulletin of the Virginia Society of Ornithology (Vol. 12, No. 6, pp. 32 - 43).

Miss Becker's work was comprehensive, including a study of the available literature, analysis of the Biological Survey banding records and food habits data, as well as an intensive observation of the five pairs of thrashers nesting on the Hollins College campus during the season of 1940. The pairs were numbered in their order of nesting. The adults (eight of the ten) were banded with Biological Survey and colored celluloid bands in such a way that each could be readily identified. The young were weighed and measured daily, and were marked individually with colored yarn, around the neck for the first week, and then, when banded, the yarn was tied to the band. This made it possi-

ble to follow post-nesting activities.

In summarizing her investigations, Miss Becker pointed out several apparently new contributions but added that, since birds are individual creatures, her observations made on the few pairs may be only the exception rather than the rule of thrasher behavior. She gave the observations as tentative, therefore, subject to further observation and verification elsewhere.

Some of the conclusions of her study are:

1. The male ordinarily chooses the first nesting site; the female selects subsequent ones.

2. The call note, a whistled "wheeu", may be given in one, two, or three syllables. The significance of the three different variations was not determined.

3. The male and female are practically identical in appearance but, if there is a difference, it is the female which is the more vividly colored. The chief difference is in the breast streakings - the female usually having more prominent ones than the male.

4. The female sings, on occasion, and does a creditable job of it.

5. The young receive parental care for approximately a month after leaving the nest. They remain in the home territory during most of this time and are almost entirely depen-

dent for the first week, after which they begin to seek their own food and, later, to explore the outside world.

6. By the time young thrashers are more or less independent (about a month out of the nest), they have acquired typical thrasher appearance for the juvenile plumage is nearly like that of the adult birds. The eye color -- which changes gradually from dark blackish-brown, through various shades

of gray and buff, to the yellow which begins to appear in August -- is the most obvious tell-tale mark of a young thrasher.

7. Young thrashers show considerable interest in adult thrasher behavior and much curiosity about the rest of their environment.

It is intended to cover the report of Miss Becker in added detail in forthcoming issues.

"ERSATZ"

Malcolm Rix

Among many other interesting items in the August issue of FEATHERS is one prophesying a prosperous season for our birds, due in part to "one of the warmest and driest springs in our history"; another describing the use of unusual nesting materials. The reading of these recalls an instance in which the unusual dryness necessitated the substitution of an equally unusual nesting material, until the need for "ersatz" was artificially overcome.

On a tree stump, sawed off about eight feet from the ground and fringed with a growth of small branches, a pair of robins started building their nest. Work proceeded normally to the point where the mud reinforcement for the floor and walls was required. There it stopped. For an entire day no progress was made. The following day the birds began to carry fresh horse manure from the street and to use it rather unsuccessfully as a substitute.

Immediately the observer rushed for water, mixed a

batch of mud, and placed it in a saucer under the tree. The birds, quickly investigating the offering, took full advantage of it and required an additional batch.

Of special interest was the position of the parent bird when brooding during a brief rain. The wings, held somewhat forward, partly open and sloping down, extended along their entire length slightly beyond the edge of the nest; the overlapping feathers giving a perfect shingle effect. The slightly spread tail also extended down, and the breast was so held against the nest that the feathers overlapped it. Thus the entire nest was efficiently furnished with a complete roof having overlapping eaves.

Several demonstrations were given to interested friends by placing the lawn sprinkler close to the nest. Lest there be cries of "Wanton cruelty!" and "Shame!", it should be noted that, when the sprinkler was moved to another part of the garden, the robin followed and reveled in its spray.



NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF

SOME PLACE TO GO?

A trip to Mt. Tom in Massachusetts is an easy Sunday excursion, with hawks aplenty.

This is also the season for a visit to Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania.

Planning on the field trips in connection with the National Audubon Society annual convention? October 18 and 19, out of New York City.

STILL MORE G-E BIRDS

The wood pewee was a G-E bird on August 7 -- recorded by B. S. Havens. It was in Building 6, perched on lighting fixtures.

In the first week of September a black-capped chickadee was seen within the gates by Esly Hallenbeck.

NEW BOOK

"A Behavior Study of the Common Tern" by Ralph S. Palmer; published by New England Museum of Natural History; \$1.

HOKED

Frank Randall, G-E artist, reports that Frank Boyce, a friend of his with a camp on Saratoga Lake, was fishing on that lake this summer when he observed two gulls apparently fighting on the lake not far away. His boat was drifting in that direction and finally came upon the gulls, which did not fly away. Boyce then reached over the side, captured one of the gulls, and took it into the boat. He then discovered that both of the gulls were hooked on the barbs of a bass plug, apparently lost by a fisherman. He

suggests that one of the birds had attempted to eat the plug, the other tried to take it away, and both were caught. He released the birds, and they flew away.

NOT EXTINCT?

Now there is a report that an ornithologist has had some Carolina parakeets under observation for five years. In 1904 the bird was reported as probably extinct. The Santee River section is said to be the remaining stronghold.

LAST WINTER

Tree swallows wintered in New England last year, and so did six species of warblers.

Out-of-season birds at Rochester last winter included the white-throated sparrow and tufted titmouse.

AT BUFFALO

Buffalo this year had its first spring record of golden plover in over 40 years. Both black and white and yellow warblers were eight days ahead of previous records.

Through July Buffalo has recorded 242 species this year.

AND IN CONCLUSION

All S B C members should pitch in to help make the October meeting a success -- and success will be measured by the attendance. The topics to be covered by Mr. Fletcher are of sufficient general interest so that it should not be difficult for each member to dispose of tickets.

Wednesday -- October 15 -- Nott Terrace High School.

FEATHERS

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L. B. FLETCHER TO SPEAK HERE

"Aside from the importance and value of its material and data, the lecture had a sparkle of genuine entertainment. Birds took on definite characters.

"The busy little wren, the gloom-dispelling song sparrow, and the debonair bobolink became friends; the deserted little bluebird wife who went out and brought home another mate to help in feeding her starving brood of five became a real heroine. The horrid old gander, who refused to remain faithful to his departed wife and took upon himself not only another wife but two, became the ever-present convention defier; the amazing tern, who flew from Labrador, across the Atlantic, around the tip of Africa to the Island of Madagascar, became the super-adventurer.

"Especially featured was the little ruby-throated hummingbird -- its nest, two wee eggs and its curious method of feeding its young. The new high-speed camera pictures, remarkable and up to a moment ago impossible, were given of the wing action of the bird.



L. B. Fletcher

"Leaving an indelible impression, the lecture closed with a high-speed camera study of the homing pigeon taking off -- with the unfolding and swirling of its wings like the expression in grace of all lovely things remembered."

In these words did the newspaper in Huntington, (N.Y.), report on the lecture given there by

Laurence B. Fletcher, the speaker at the October meeting of the Schenectady Bird Club. The talk, featuring the importance of birds in the garden, some results of six years' bird-banding, and a study of the hummingbird, will be illustrated in color, with both slides and high-speed motion pictures.

The talk will be given in the Nott Terrace High School auditorium at 8 o'clock on Wednesday, October 15. As explained in the September issue of FEATHERS, it will be necessary to charge admission -- 25 cents for members, 35 cents for non-members. All SBC members have been asked to cooperate in the sale of tickets, not only to assure the success

of this meeting but to make it possible to continue the program of outside speakers.

Preceding the meeting there will be a supper at which members of the club will have an excellent opportunity to become better acquainted and to meet the speaker in an informal way. The supper cost will be 75 cents. Mr. and Mrs. William H. Norris, Jr., have invited the club to their home at 1061 Waverly Place for the supper. Those planning to attend should telephone Mrs. Norris, 4-6847, before October 12 so the committee can make the arrangements for the food. Supper will be at 6 o'clock.

Additional tickets for the meeting can be obtained from the committee captains or from Mrs. Chester N. Moore, program chairman.

Mr. Fletcher, prominent as a worker among garden and bird clubs, was the principal speaker at the Federation of Garden Clubs luncheon in New York City last spring, at the time of the International Flower Show. Among his activities are the presidency of the Northeastern Bird-banding Association, and the secretaryship of both the Federation of Bird Clubs of New England and of the Trustees of Public Reservations in Massachusetts.

BLITZED

Somewhere around Schenectady County in the vicinity of General Electric's new 100,000-watt transmitter of WGEO, powerful short-wave radio station in South Schenectady, is possibly a tough, one-legged sparrow hawk who dared to try to roost on a transmission line feeding the antenna.

A pal of his met death at apparently the same time, for her legs, burned off at the first joint, were firmly holding one of the transmission wires, high in the air.

The aerial tragedy was discovered by Ole Omland, rigger at the station, as he conducted a routine inspection of the lines feeding the transmitting antenna with its tremendously high power. He first noticed the three legs on the wire, and on further investigation found the body of one hawk about 50 feet away from a point directly under the legs. There

was no sign of the second bird whose one leg also gripped the wire.

Technically what happened, according to H. G. Towlson, the engineer in charge of the transmitter, was that the two hawks in attempting their tragic roost, produced a corona arc or discharge, which caused a flow of current through their bodies. At such a frequency as 9,530,000 cycles and at 100,000 watts, a very considerable current can discharge directly into space and flow through anything getting in the way.

Whether or not the other hawk is actually alive today after his high-frequency experience is a matter for conjecture, Mr. Towlson admitted. However, it seems he had endurance enough to survive the terrific shock and fly off, leaving a leg behind. Of such stuff are hawks made.

WE RETURN TO GASPE

Edna Hallenbeck



It is hard to describe the charm of the Gaspé Peninsula; just what spell it casts that makes you want to go back again and again. Perhaps because it has everything that most vacationists enjoy -- extraordinary mountain scenery for those who love the mountains, and picturesque bays with white sand beaches for lovers of the seashore.

Added to this beauty is the touch of Old - World France, whose habits and customs have been preserved by an almost unspoiled population.

It is advised that tourists go from Quebec and follow the north shore to Gaspé; then down the south shore, crossing the peninsula through the Matapédia Valley. On this, our second trip, we reversed the

order, however, by going to the Maine coast, up through New Brunswick to Campbellton along the Bay of Chaleurs to Perce.

We arrived in a good old nor'easter, and no one was very encouraging. Always lasted three days, the fishermen said, and sometimes a week. This was not time lost, however, as we enjoyed watching the gulls clean up the shore after the fishermen brought in and cleaned their catch. Purple martins and many of the other swallows were numerous, flying about; and the songs of the white-throated and savannah sparrows were heard everywhere.

The clearing day we were waiting for came, and at 9 a. m. we started with Willie

Duval for Bonaventure Island. Companions on our trip were Mr. Peters from Washington, D. C., who was making a bird survey from Newfoundland to southern Canada, and Mrs. Barrett from Fredricton, N. B.

The day was perfect and the sea just rough enough to be exciting. As we passed Perce Rock we saw hundreds of cormorants nesting there. The herring gulls flew back and forth, and sea pigeons with their bright red bills and legs were swimming and diving about us.

We made the trip around the island, and what a thrilling sight it was. Thousands of gannets nesting on the cliffs. From a distance it looked as though the rocks had blossomed forth with pure white flowers.

Mr. Duval pointed out several puffins, colonies of murres,

kittiwakes and razor-billed auks flying to their nests. High in the sky was a lone duck hawk.

John Duval met us at the landing place and led us the two miles across the island to the top of the cliffs. As we walked along the edge, the gannets with their one baby were unafraid -- scolded a bit but you could have touched them if you weren't afraid of losing a hand. Among the murres we were fortunate to see the unusual variety that has a white ring around the eye and a white line curving backward, giving the effect of spectacles.

The air was full of males bringing their gifts of fish and seaweed. The sea and sky so blue, and white birds sailing, was something we shall always remember -- one beautiful day on Bonaventure Island.

BOTULISM STRIKES

We quote the Union-Star of September 24:

"An investigation of a number of dead ducks found by sportsmen on the backwaters of the Mohawk River at Niskayuna has revealed that botulism, a deadly disease among wild ducks, has struck into the Schenectady area, marking the first appearance of the plague in New York State within the memory of the Bureau of Game, State Conservation Department.

"Investigators from the Conservation Department, checking reports that dead ducks had been found in the Niskayuna pools, visited the scene and gathered the bodies of 38 mallard ducks along with green-

and blue-winged teals. Pathologists of the department quickly diagnosed the cause.

"The disease, they said, results from pollution of water, caused primarily by the drying up of source supplies. This, in turn, lowers the pond levels where wild fowl feed, causing death to one or more of the birds. The decay of their bodies in the water results in additional pollution and death spreads to others."

: : :

We subscribe to the theory that water chestnut, the pest of the river which is ever increasing in abundance and about which much is heard but nothing done, can be blamed a plenty for the notoriously

filthy condition of the river in this area.

Volumes can be, and some day may be, written about the sad history of the Mohawk River. The facts are on record -- in various state reports, and in different newspaper accounts. At this time let's just take a glance at some of the facts concerning the Mohawk and the water chestnut:

For more than 50 years water chestnut has been found in Collins Lake (Sanders Lake), and apparently the first published record of the plant in this country is for there.

One report is that the weed was introduced in 1884.

This section of the Mohawk, and the Sudbury and Potomac Rivers are the most notorious as havens for the chestnut.

Hundreds of acres of the quiet waters of the Mohawk and of Collins Lake are so choked with dense growths of water chestnut that they are useless. And the chestnut growth is so thick the plants kill off themselves, adding to the poor condition of the water. Back in 1934 the state estimated the area occupied by water chestnut as between 1000 and 1200 acres. It has spread considerably since then.

"A Biological Survey of the Mohawk-Hudson Watershed," published by the Conservation Department in 1934, mentioned that "considerable interest" was aroused by the spread of the plant.

Several pages of the survey are devoted to water chestnut, and the picture it paints of the plant and its effects is far from encouraging.

Still referring to the survey, oxygen relations through-

out the Crescent Lake section (between Locks 6 and 7) were found to be low at all depths, becoming critical at Crescent bridge and in the area immediately above the Crescent dams. In Crescent Lake, the survey reported, conditions become aggravated downstream instead of better.

Several years back plans were announced for a duck-breeding sanctuary to occupy a large area covered by the ponds below Vischers. A dike was built, and Stony Creek was to maintain the water level of the area, caring for seepage and evaporation. The CCC labor left; parts of the dike are still in evidence, but there is no duck-breeding pond. Certainly the flow in Stony Creek was not sufficient to have supported such a pond this unusually dry summer and, to make things worse, water chestnut is now so widespread in that section of the old Erie Canal and the adjoining small ponds that it seems like a hopeless area.

"The killing of a number of pickerel, carp, bass, suckers, and other species of fish in the back waters of the Mohawk River known as Lavign's Flats (below Vischers Ferry) was today described by Conservation Department officials as caused by lack of oxygen in the water. ... The lack of oxygen in the water, officials said, was caused by an excessive amount of vegetation, in this case water chestnuts," said a Conservation Department release to the newspapers June 9, 1938

"A horned devil, intentionally planted in the waters of Sanders Lake, Scotia, about 50 years ago in the mistaken idea that it would improve fishing

conditions and which has now ruined bathing, fishing and boating wherever it has appeared, may soon be given the fight it deserves," said a Conservation Department press bulletin of February 2, 1936. The report went on to say that the assignment of CCC enrollees to the task of eradicating the weed was looked for. "The need for controlling and prevention of the spread of the water chestnut cannot be over-emphasized," said the report.

"Only by complete eradication may water chestnut plants be prevented from propagating" said Nature Magazine in August, 1930.

"A Horned Devil Chokes Our Rivers" said a headline in the "This Week" magazine section of the New York Herald-Tribune of December 29, 1935, pointing out what a threat the plant offers.

"Begin Work to Rid Lake of Chestnuts," said a Gazette headline on July 13, 1938, referring to a raking campaign in Collins Lake.

"NYA Youths to Begin Clearing Weeds in Lake" said a Gazette headline of August 4, 1938.

"According to Baron Santee, local biologist and expert on water chestnut and similar growths, Collins Lake can be completely rid of the chestnut in four years," said the Gazette on August 12, 1938, referring to use of a range oil spray.

"Will Test New Method to Clear Lake of Chestnuts," said another Gazette headline, this one on August 15, 1939. It referred to a metallic spray



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method demonstrated by a New Jersey concern.

"Water Chestnut Nuisance in Lake May Be Abated -- Experiment with Spray Appears Successful; Village and State Officials Observe Demonstration" the Gazette further reported three days later.

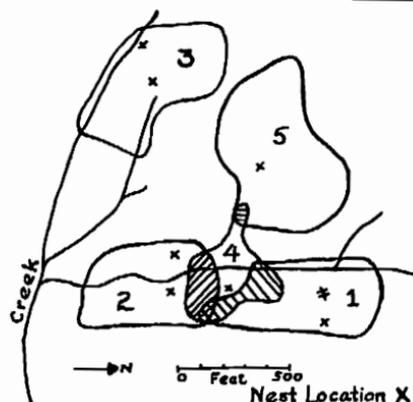
The publication "Water Works Engineering" of August 27, 1941, describes an automatic weeding machine, constructed at a cost of \$4,000, that is apparently doing a satisfactory job in bringing up weeds and bailing them. It is in operation at Lake Mohawk, in New Jersey.

It's a wonder that the water chestnut is not already established in the Hudson River, particularly in those very good fishing areas and wide expanses of marshes several miles below Albany. Dead nuts have been found at various times along the Hudson, and it is probably just a matter of good luck that the weed is not already choking the back water of that river.

Water hyacinth is a problem in southern rivers. United States Engineers have fought that pest by spraying long jets of an arsenious spray on the plants and, in 1937, introduced a craft for gathering the plants.

And in conclusion, water chestnut is much like the weather. Much has been said about it, but not much has been done about it.

THRASHER TERRITORIES



Territorial Conflicts:

▨ 1 & 4 ▩ 2 & 4 ▧ 1, 2 & 4 ▤ 4 & 5

Brown thrashers nesting on the campus of Hollins College, Virginia, had nests and territories in 1940 as indicated on the above map. The five pairs of birds were subjects of an intensive study by Edna Becker in preparation for her thesis toward an M. S. degree at Cornell University. The map was explained by Miss Becker at the SBC meeting in September. As reproduced above, the details of buildings, roads, and paths have been omitted from her original drawing.

In a summary of her thesis, as published in *The Raven*, June, 1941, she wrote:

"The male thrashers ordinarily arrive in the breeding areas several weeks ahead of the females. They migrate singly, as a rule. As soon as a suitable site is reached, the male begins to announce to the world -- particularly to other males of his kind -- where his selected territory is. He does this by singing loudly from a high perch.

Should another male appear too close, he increases the volume and ferventness of his singing, in an attempt to out-do the intruder. The closer the selected territories are, the more frequent and the more violent will the conflicts be. In most territorial disputes which I witnessed the original occupant asserted his rights vigorously when an intruder appeared but before long they tolerated each other so long as the intimacy was not too close. This relationship persisted throughout the nesting period -- toleration so long as the other remained at a safe distance. As soon as any thrasher came too close to a nest, however, both male and female would be equally prompt to chase away the intruder. This happened several times in my observation.

"When there is rivalry between two males for a single female, territorial boundaries are temporarily forgotten -- both males keeping near the female regardless of whose territory she may enter. Male #4, who had previously lost in such a situation to male #2, met a similar fate with male #5 in spite of going to the farthest limit of the latter's territory in addition to singing valiantly.

"As soon as all nesting activities are over for the season, territory is no longer important. Apparently, it is customary for the female, with half of the young, to leave the territory within a few days after the young are fledged, if no second nest is contemplated."



NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF

RARE NEST

United Press in early September carried an item about a goshawk nest near Dublin, N.H. It was stated that it was the first time a goshawk was known to have raised a family outside the Arctic regions.

Forbush, in *Birds of Massachusetts*, lists the goshawk as a rare summer resident in Vermont and New Hampshire, more common to casual summer resident in Maine, and very rare summer resident in Massachusetts; and even to have nested in Connecticut. He presents several Massachusetts breeding records.

DIFFERENT

Field & Stream for August may be right in its wheeze (p. 60) about "The Obliging Bittern" that posed very conveniently for its pictures, but the accompanying photographs look a lot more like pictures of an immature black-crowned night heron.

WESTWARD HO!

Around here we don't give much consideration to the idea that the starling can be rare anywhere in the country. Not until the 1938-1939 winter, however, did Colorado have any of them. Already they have become numerous in some sections of the state.

MORE FOR G-E

The G-E list of birds still grows -- a house wren there on September 8 (W. R. Steele) and several chickadees feeding in front of Building 2 on Satur-

day noon, September 20 (Nelle Van Vorst).

NEW DELMAR LABORATORY

Wildlife management and accomplishments in the field of game research featured a two-day meeting of the northeastern session of the American Wildlife Society and Pittman-Robertson workers at the Conservation Department's Wildlife Research Center at Delmar on September 26 and 27.

Highlighting the two-day session, bringing together representatives from 14 eastern states and D. C., as well as scores of outstanding conservationists and sportsmen, a new, modern laboratory devoted exclusively to studies of all game species inhabiting New York State was formally dedicated.

NEW BOOKLET

Wild Ducks -- American Wildlife Institute, The Investment Building, Washington, D. C., 25 cents. Includes 16 color plates by Fred Everett, with concise life histories and distribution maps; story of waterfowl and wildfowling by Col. H. P. Sheldon, Fish and Wildlife Service, and story of their migratory habits by F. C. Lincoln.

GOING SOUTH?

The National Audubon Society is conducting wildlife tours in the Charleston - Bull's Island Region, South Carolina, during November and December, with Alexander Sprunt, Jr., in charge. Each tour is for a two-day period.

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CAPE COD VIA BEACH WAGON

Frances Reeves

Let's go birding on Cape Cod! Is the tide high? A chart may be consulted, or a local paper; then add or deduct an hour and perhaps the time of high tide can be ascertained. The tide plays a very important part as the waders and the small peepers feed on the mudflats when the tide is low. When it is high they are all forced to congregate at certain higher places.

With high tide at Nauset Point a very fascinating trip can be made by beach wagon from the Nauset Coast Guard Station to Nauset Point, which is the end of a wall of ocean sand dunes separating salty marshland from the shore. Driving down, it is possible to keep very near the ocean except in places where the remains of wreckage block the way, and then the inner road passing through marshes must be (To p. 90)

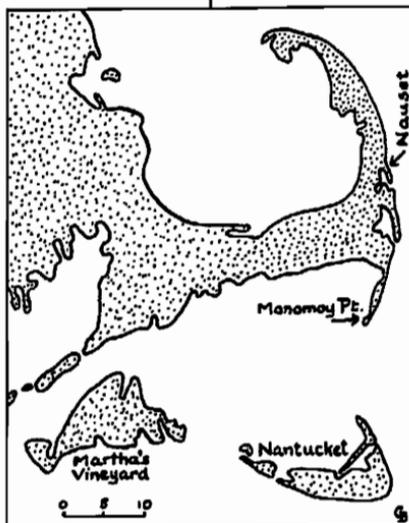
NANTUCKET'S SUMMER BIRDS

H. V. D. Allen

The following comments on 1941 birds of Nantucket cover the period from July 16 to September 24, approximately the migration period for all birds but the ducks. Nantucket is off to the east of the flyways of North America and whereas large flocks of ocean birds are seen on Monomoy and the shores of Cape Cod, the migration seems to pass from the Cape to Martha's Vineyard, and from there down the coast. Even the northeastern corner of the Island, Great Point, although only ten miles due

south of the end of Monomoy Point, does not show any essentially different migrating birds from the rest of the island - Nantucket is just too far away to the southeast.

However, it is possible to find interesting accidental birds from time to time. For instance, there was a lone male American gold- (To p. 91)



CAPE COD

(Continued from page 89)
taken. This inner road passes very near Henry Beston's "Outermost House."

Awaiting Ebb Tide

The sanderlings and a few white-rumped sandpipers are skittering along the outer shore. At the marsh pools flocks of larger sandpipers flush and settle quickly a few feet ahead. A western sandpiper is identified in with them. We leave the beach wagon near the point, and it is amazing to look ahead and see the thousands of birds gathered to rest until their feeding grounds are again exposed by the ebbing tide.

A flock of western willets drift down, showing their beautiful white wing and tail pattern. In a few minutes several dowitchers have joined them. Immediately every dowitcher is studied closely in the hope of discovering a long-billed. However, we are not lucky enough to find one.

Without Mingling

A huge flock of black-bellied plover and knots move from one small, quiet bay to another, but at no time mingle with the flock of terns, small peeps, or gulls. A few ruddy turnstones are seen in their gay plumage but most of them, as have the other species, have donned their fall suits. At the very point many common and roseate terns have assembled, while the herring and some great black-backed gulls keep to an outer bar.

As we look over the sandy

shore we discover what appear to be many furry patches but which closer investigation discloses to be hundreds of semipalmated sandpipers. A young sora scampering away through the marsh grass is an unexpected find.

A sudden disturbance, and several groups are in the air. A duck hawk in flight is the cause of the commotion.

As the tide recedes, the groups break up, the many regiments of small birds disassemble, and start out for their next meal.

Monomoy, Different

Monomoy Point affords a much more exciting trip, as entirely different birds are found there. Again we leave in a beach wagon, this time from Chatham, for a 25-mile drive along the beach.

As we leave Chatham we drive through some very good warbler territory but, as we are more interested in the water birds, we do not stop. About the same species of birds are to be found along the way, but not as many as at Nauset.

Parasitic

Along the outer shore is the most exciting part of the drive, watching for scoters and other ducks. A duck is sighted, which careful scrutiny discloses to be an eider. Soon more eiders, and scoters, ride the waves. As we near the extreme end of the point we see hundreds of terns feeding. Our driver, peering out over the ocean, calls our at-

tention to a parasitic jaeger. We were fortunate in seeing both phases of these hawk-like birds, swooping in from the far horizon and, as is their most unpleasant habit, harrying the terns for the fish they have just caught. The poor terns may as well surrender their catch first or last, as the jaegers will get it, either before or after it has been swallowed.

The sight of a Cory's shearwater, and a flock of northern phalaropes, rounded out a very satisfactory Cape Cod trip.

(For other Cape Cod reports see FEATHERS, 1939, Nov. and Dec., pages 26 and 30.)

AUDUBON ON DISPLAY

Last year members of the Schenectady Bird Club enjoyed the privilege of examining the Union College set of Audubon's "The Birds of America." Time did not permit the display of all the volumes at that time, and it was suggested by Helmer L. Webb, Union College librarian, that the other volumes be shown at a later meeting. That will be done at the November meeting -- on Saturday night, November 15, at 8 p. m. in the Union College library.

As in the case of last year, it will be necessary to observe certain rules. The volumes are seldom on view since the nature of the printing and the age of the books -- well over a century -- demand minimum handling. Only SBC members can be admitted; the visitors are not to touch the books; and the meeting must be started promptly at 8 o'clock.

NANTUCKET

(Continued from page 89)
en-eye on the harbor on July 18 and 19, and on July 20 an immature common loon was seen, recently dead, on the southern shore. After this the summer was discouraging; there had been so much rain during June and July that the reedy ponds on the south shore were filled with water, covering the mud flats so that sandpipers appeared only on the harbor flats at low tide. Gradually in August the ponds dried up and the least sandpipers appeared, then a few lesser and two greater yellowlegs, and pectoral, stilt, and solitary sandpipers, and Hudsonian curlews, upland plover, and other species.

Black-bellied Plovers Scarce

On the harbor flats we had the piping and semipalmated plovers and, of course, the herring and laughing gulls. Then the ruddy turnstones appeared, followed by the black-bellied plover -- one or two by August 1, with a maximum of fifty by the end of the month (perhaps 100 for the whole island), which compares very poorly with the rest of the New England coast as reported by the New England Museum of Natural History.

About the first of September we began to see things. First a possible western sandpiper, with its long, deep bill and dark legs; positive identification in the field is difficult. Next an osprey, and later four ospreys on adjacent fence posts near Hummock Pond, so close together I could get them into the field of my glasses at once (almost).

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There was a marsh hawk nearby. The osprey seems to float with its wings horizontal; the marsh hawk with its wings held slightly above the horizontal. Could this be characteristic?

Dr. Gordon Meade of Rochester, N. Y., claimed a long-billed dowitcher along with the eastern variety, and the next day he saw two bobolinks in reedbird plumage among a flock of cowbirds.

Forster's Tern

On September 4 I saw five solitary sandpipers around a duck pond near the south shore. By this time the laughing gulls had gone south and in their place were a much smaller number of immature birds with a falsetto cry very similar to that of the adults. On the sixth, at Great Point, the northeastern corner of the island, I got the willet, probably the western variety, and an immature Bonaparte's gull alongside three immature laughing gulls. A moment later I had what I believe was an immature Forster's tern, with a white head with wash of gray on the side, and a very light gray body and wings. It was certainly not a young common or roseate, of which there were numbers at the west end of the island. This identification seems to check with Peterson's description in his Field Guide.

Yellow-headed

The next day, September 7, we located a yellow-headed blackbird with a flock of cowbirds around a herd of cows. This was not a female since the face was too brilliant a yellow, but on the other hand the dark color of the back

seemed to be carried up over the nape and crown. Unfortunately I had no description of the winter and immature plumages. The bird was seen once more, near another herd of cows, and these observations were checked by a half dozen observers.

Rare Sandpipers

Next day I twice saw the buff-breasted sandpiper along with two pectorals, first with my own glasses and the second time through a 35-power prism telescope with a three-inch objective. The breast coloring was not as brilliant as the bird I saw some years ago. A hundred feet away was a Baird's sandpiper. Both birds seemed to me like small editions of the upland plover. Dr. Meade was responsible for picking out these three birds. A few golden plover showed up about the same time, and two blue-gray gnatcatchers were reported by Dr. and Mrs. Edgar V. Seeler of Harvard.

Unknown Warblers

The season ended for me with a flock of 15 baldpates and two unknown warblers, the description of which I should like to submit to SBC members who may be more familiar with autumn plumages. There were two of these birds, of warbler size, first seen on a wire fence at a distance of about twenty feet, and again on the ground three feet from the car. They were olive gray above, without markings, and with a long, dark tail. The breast had gray streaks on a light gray ground and the underparts were light gray without marks. What should settle the species was a wash of very noticeable yellow on both the

rump and abdomen. This would seem to indicate the magnolia. There was a line through the eye and a light line in the center of the forehead. The call was a pronounced "chip." I have assumed that these were young birds since they lacked fear. A search through Forbush seemed to narrow down to the young Nashville warbler.

I have a record of 79 species seen, which is poor. The list contains practically no ducks, hawks, warblers, or sparrows, but does include all the sandpipers and plovers but three -- the knot, purple, and

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red-backed. One spends all one's time at the ponds and on the shore, and none in the yards and flower gardens where many other species may be found.

(Mr. Allen also reported on the birds of Nantucket last year -- FEATHERS, August-September, 1940, page 38.)

AGAIN, WATER CHESTNUT

In the last issue much space was devoted to comments concerning water chestnut, now past the stage of simply being a threat locally. Already there is reason for another blast.

In the middle of September there was a newspaper account to the effect that President Roosevelt, seeing the water chestnut choking the Potomac, suggested that the Department of Agriculture investigate the possibility of finding a use for the chestnut growth to offset the expense of clearing them from navigation channels.

Maybe it's too bad President Roosevelt had not been on a Mohawk River rather than Potomac River cruise when he made his suggestion. But if the local chestnuts were tackled for a use, the results would be hopeless; and maybe the Potomac chestnut growth is not such a stinking mess as the local one. Maybe the Department of Agriculture will be

successful in its quest. The water chestnut is used as food abroad, and maybe the Potomac chestnuts also could.

But it's a different story when the Crescent Lake growth is concerned. Even as far back as 1934, when the chestnut was not so dense as it is today, and before it was being blamed for dead fish and the appearance of deadly botulism among the ducks, the New York State Conservation Department in its "Biological Survey of the Mohawk - Hudson Watershed" wrote:

"The water chestnut contains a large seed which is rich in food value. However, it is obvious that the hard covering with its stout spines makes it impossible for fish or birds to consume them. The stems and leaves of the water chestnut support a luxuriant growth of attached forms of other plants such as algae, and also numerous forms of small animals, which supply food for

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fish, or other animals which in turn are eaten by fish. Numerous insects which feed on or congregate upon the water chestnut leaves, supply food for certain water birds. Many birds have been observed on the water chestnut beds in Lake Crescent. It is probable, of course, that most of these smaller forms of life can also thrive on other aquatic plants such as pondweeds and eel-grass. In many localities in Crescent Lake the water chestnut is so dense that the other plants have probably been crowded out for the most part.

"The nuts of the water chestnut are eaten very readily by muskrats. They have been observed feeding upon them in the Sudbury River and Potomac River. Any attempt to popularize the water chestnut for food purposes in this country is likely to be confronted with several objections based upon aesthetic, sanitary and economic grounds. The water in which the water chestnut thrives best is rather dirty and sometimes actually filthy. The plants, and often the ripe fruit, are co-

vered with microscopic organisms which impart to them a scum-like appearance, a slimy touch, and a fishy odor. In certain parts of the world the liver fluke disease has been contracted by humans from eating raw water chestnuts. Other pathogenic organisms may find their way into the water and onto the water chestnuts. Water chestnuts growing in waters such as the Mohawk River should not be used for food until after they have been thoroughly boiled. The contents of the nuts are undoubtedly clean, but the danger of contamination arises from the water in which they grow. To eat them raw would be taking a chance."

Last month there was a mention to the effect that it was altogether possible that water chestnut would in time become established in the Hudson and eventually make that river as much a mess as is the Mohawk.

Already there is evidence that the chestnut has gained a foothold in the Hudson. It is reported as growing above the Waterford bridge and in the Stockport marshes.



NEWS AND NOTES IN BRIEF

AUDUBON BOOK

Particularly in view of the subject of the November meeting, there is interest in the announcement of a new edition of Audubon's "The Birds of America," with 435 reproductions in full color of Audubon's prints, 9½ by 12½ inches. The plates used are those prepared for the popular edition of 1937, at a price of \$12.50.

The new edition, published by The Macmillan Company, is available through National Audubon Society at \$4.95.

ATTRACTING HUMMERS

Lupins, delphiniums, and bee balm, in that order, were suggested by Laurence B. Fletcher of Boston, speaker at the SBC meeting in October, as the flowers most attractive to

the hummingbird. And honey-filled feeders are just as attractive, he showed.

By the way, the October meeting was a success not only with regard to the interest in the program but also in the financial return to the club, to be applied on future meetings with such speakers.

THANK YOU

Your program committee wants to take this opportunity to thank all S B C members and friends who helped make Mr. Fletcher's lecture in Schenectady a success.

-- Mrs. G. N. Moore, Chrmn.

CHRISTMAS COUNT

The National Audubon Society annual Christmas bird count is to be made throughout the nation from December 21 to 28 inclusive. Schenectady is, as usual, planning to participate and will make its plans at the December meeting.

AT THE "WORKS"

The list of G - E birds is still a growing one. Now there is a record of the wood thrush, seen in late August on the lawn near the main gate by Beatrice Sullivan.

A female downy woodpecker was seen October 23 by Nelle VanVorst trying to find her breakfast on the metal work and poles along Building 18.

AUDUBON CONTEST

Since the Schenectady Bird Club is affiliated with the National Audubon Society, SBC members are eligible to participate in a prize contest being conducted by that society.

Give your answer to the question, "What Does My Audu-

bon Membership Mean to Me Today?" in not more than 300 words, and submit entry by December 15. Prizes of \$50, \$25, and \$10 will be awarded. Details of the contest are available from the S B C secretary.

SANDERLINGS

Along with other, more usual species at Watervliet Reservoir on October 13 there were a few sanderlings, Nelle Van Vorst reports.

UNTIL MID-DECEMBER

Not until December 15 will the ducks in this vicinity be safe from hunters. There was probably no exaggeration in hunters' estimates that there were more than 3,000 ducks in the Niskayuna pools at the opening of the duck-hunting season in mid-October; but the hunters, of which there was an abundance, quickly accounted for many, dispersed the flocks and made it unwise for new arrivals to tarry there.

Incidentally, several flocks of migrating geese were seen in flight Sunday, October 5.

WILSON CONVENTION

The 27th annual meeting of The Wilson Ornithological Club will be held at Champaign-Urbana, Ill., November 21 to 23. Two features of the program will be a bird ecology symposium and an all-day Sunday field trip to the Lake Chautauqua Wildlife Refuge on the Illinois River.

WOOD DUCKS PROTECTED

It is generally recognized that such is the case, but the question has been asked so here is the answer. The fed-

eral duck hunting regulations were changed this year to permit the taking of one wood duck per day. In this state, however, and in a majority of the other states there is a state law protecting the species.

Incidentally, the snipe has joined the list of protected species this year.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Bobwhite Quail Propagation; 50 p. illus.; Fish & Wildlife Service, Conservation Bulletin 10. Giving the essential principles involved in feeding and management of quail raised in captivity. From Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.; 10 cents.

Ponds for Wildlife; 46 p. illus.; Agriculture Department Farmers' Bulletin 1879. To show how farmers may protect their ponds from sedimentation, soil erosion, and water loss through the use of vegetation suitable as food and shelter for wildlife, and to give some information on the management of wildlife in farm ponds. From Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.; 10 cents.

IN THE AUK

The Auk for October contains the second, and concluding, part of the article on "Annual Cycle of the Black-capped Chickadee," by Eugene P. Odum, reporting on a study made at the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, Rensselaerville.

Also in that issue is a general note by Dr. Dayton Stoner of the State Museum at Albany on "A Noteworthy Concentration of Birds." He reports on an observation on March 14 when he saw seven species feeding

on a small plot of newly fertilized ground in an area covered by snow. Included were a male pheasant, about 100 northern horned larks, about 20 prairie horned larks, four meadowlarks, two male and one female redwing, three Lapland longspurs, and about 150 snow buntings.

That issue also has a report by Jacob Bates Abbott of Dublin, N. H., on the nesting goshawk to which we referred last month (p.88). No mention is made in The Auk of the rarity of the nest.

ALSO LOCAL

"The Belligerency of the Kingbird" is the subject of an article in the September issue of The Wilson Bulletin. The author, David E. Davis, based the study on observations made possible by a summer fellowship at the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, Rensselaerville, in 1940. The Huyck Preserve was the scene of the SBC meeting in August.

GROWING

Do you know that Volume 1 of FEATHERS contained 36 pages, and that Volume 2 had 64 pages? All of which leads up to the fact that Volume 3 will have more than 100 pages -- and that is more than in Volumes 1 and 2 combined.

No less a growth has been shown by the S B C programs in these years. We have had more speakers with real entertainment this year.

It's not too soon to start to think about 1942. How many pages in FEATHERS and how many out-of-town speakers depends on you. Added membership means added funds for carrying on an extended program.

FEATHERS

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ON MONTAUK POINT

Dorothy Caldwell

The field trip to Montauk Point from New York City October 19, sponsored by the National Audubon Society as part of its annual convention program, proved a rare treat to a few fortunate members of the Sassafras and Schenectady Bird Clubs.

Out of the hotel at 5 a.m., when Broadway was dim and eerie and scantily populated, an all-night quick lunch offered the most feasible breakfasting place. The early morning birders had the curious experience of starting the day with some rather bleary-eyed Broadway owls that were just rounding off their night's activities. Up Fifth Avenue, still before daylight, to Audubon House where we joined other enthusiasts for the 6 a.m. start for the eastern tip of Long Island under the guidance of Allen Cruickshank and Joseph Cadbury, assisted by Alexander Sprunt and Carl Buchheister.

The day was sunny, mild, and clear. Our first stop was at Oyster Bay and the Roosevelt Bird Sanctuary (well described in the Audubon Magazine for May-June, 1941). We passed the beautiful memorial fountain and went along paths rich-

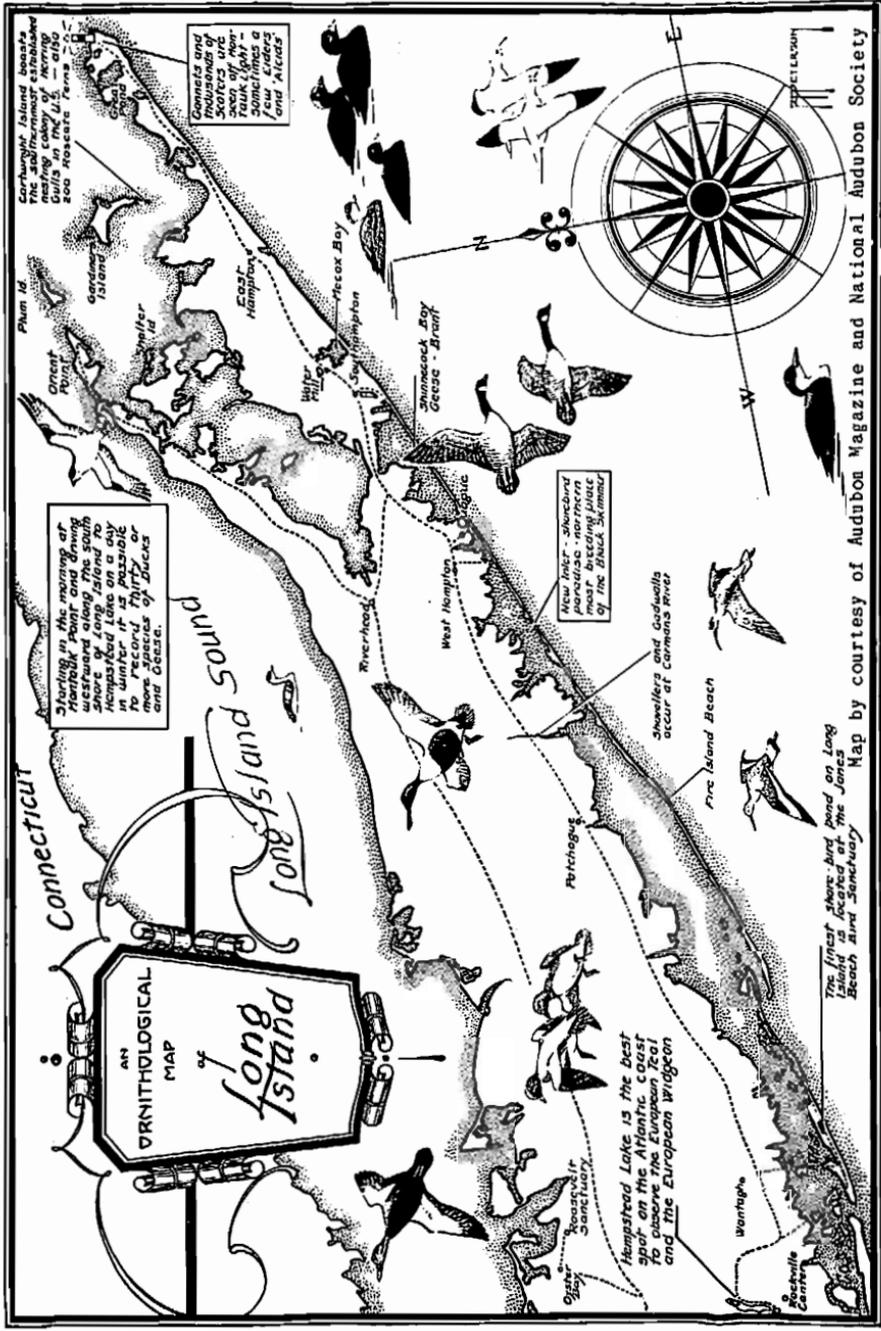
ly planted with special regard for the bird population.

White-throats were singing, towhees calling, and chickadees, kinglets, nuthatches, and juncos were in evidence.

The second stop was at Mill Neck, where the road crosses a marsh with much open water. Here were a large and varied gathering of great blue and black-crowned night herons, pied-billed grebes, mute swans, Canada geese, several species of ducks, including shovellers, and also coots, killdeer, yellow-legs, herring and ring-billed gulls, as well as waxwings, myrtle warblers, and other passerine birds, all diligently searching for food or flying in and out. Swans in flight across the marsh gave us the most thrilling moment of the morning.

The third stop was at Bayville, on the north shore, where huge flocks of scoters were weaving back and forth in the air or dropping into the Sound. Assistance was given by Mr. Cruickshank in the identification of American, white-winged, and surf scoters.

Again we continued the beautiful drive down Long Island



Starting in the morning at the eastern tip of the shore of Long Island to Hempstead Lake on a day when the wind is from the north, you will find no more species of Ducks and Geese.

Gulls and thousands of other birds nest on the shores of the bay, and sometimes a few "Auklets" and "Alcids".

New York - Shoreland most breeding place of the Black Skimmer.

Hempstead Lake is the best spot on the island for the European Crow and the European Wagtail.

The finest shore-bird pond on Long Island is located at the Jones Beach Bird Sanctuary.

Plum Island
Cormorant Island boasts the largest number of nesting gulls of any island in the Long Island Sound.

Connecticut

AN ORNITHOLOGICAL MAP of Long Island

Map by courtesy of Audubon Magazine and National Audubon Society

over the superb new parkways. The next stop was at Shinnecock Bay, well out toward the tip of the island. Box lunches were produced and eaten on the shore, with gulls and cormorants in the foreground over the still blue waters of the bay.

Montauk Point is always a very fascinating and beautiful place, with its wild moors and its great bluff rising out of the sea. The day was exquisitely clear and calm; Block Island was plainly visible; two gannets were seen far out to sea; flocks of scoters were constantly passing; once a flock of cormorants flew by; and an old - squaw was in full view just off the point. The lighthouse lawns and the nearby downs teemed with meadow-larks, juncos, chipping and white-throated sparrows.

A whole day could be spent happily at Montauk Point, but time was passing too rapidly and, after a brief hour, the buses started the return trip. On the drive back we followed the south shore closely to



SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB

Annual Membership: Active, \$2; Assoc., \$1

Guy Bartlett, Editor, R.D.1, Rosendale Road

Westhampton and then went along the dune road until the sun sank over the marshes just as the road came to an end. We walked a short distance across the sands to Moriches Inlet, and in the fading light could see myriads of shore birds on the mud flats. While the experts were helping us to identify them, a duck hawk went over and a flock of red-breasted mergansers flew in. We crossed to the outer beach just at dusk, and there we found little companies of sand-larks, marching up and down the beach, barely visible in the last of the daylight.

About 90 birds were listed for the glorious day's trip. An excellent account of the birding possibilities of this region is given in "Birding Down Long Island" by William Vogt, Bird-Lore, 1938, p. 331.

CHRISTMAS CENSUS - DEC. 21

Sunday, December 21, has been selected as the day on which the Schenectady Bird Club will make its Christmas count of the birds of the vicinity. Chester N. Moore will be in charge of the arrangements.

The Christmas count will be nothing new in the experiences of a large number of SBC members. Such trips have been on the docket for years, and each one has witnessed an increase in the number of participants.

Final arrangements for the individual trips will be made at the December meeting of the club -- at 8 o'clock on Monday night, December 15, at Mont Pleasant High School. Those intending to participate in the census should be present, or communicate with the census chairman in advance of the meeting.

Information concerning the censuses is available in the December issues of FEATHERS of previous years.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

ANY OWLS?

Do you know fairly definitely where there is an owl? Or do you know of a wintering robin? If you do, they should be spoken about at the December meeting, so that plans can be made to include them in the Christmas count on December 21. Last year's count did include a wintering robin, but no owls.

The 1940 Christmas count had 30 species and 3500 individuals, with 29 participants.

This year's census will be the 13th consecutive for the local "15-mile circle." Sixty species are included on the composite list.

G-E

Another on that ever-growing list of birds at the G-E:

A chickadee in Building 6 on November 6 and 7, recorded by Barrington S. Ravens.

FEED THEM NOW

Is your feeding station up, at work, and receiving regular attention from both you and the birds?

It is the early-started and well-maintained feeding station that attracts the most and holds the most visitors through the winter season.

Now is the time to spread the banquet table -- suet, nut meats, crumbs, table scraps -- and also raisins, green vegetables, fruits, cereals, and grains. And peanut butter.

Maybe before the season is over some will feed from your hand, or even come through the open window if invited.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Feeding Wildlife in Winter, 20 p. illus.; Fish and Wildlife Service, Conservation Bulletin 13; Supt. of Doc.; 10 cents. Gives information relating to need for winter feeding, upland game and other land birds, waterfowl, small mammals, and big game.

Birds of North and Middle America: Part 9 (Cranes, rails, coots, gallinules, sun-grebes, sun-bitterns); 254 p. illus.; National Museum, Bulletin 50, Part 9; Superintendent of Documents, 40 cents. A descriptive catalog of birds known to occur in North America.

To simplify the procedure of ordering publications from the Superintendent of Documents at Washington, the secretary of S. B. C., Miss Van Vorst, will be glad to consolidate orders from club members.

MORE BENT BULLETINS

Volume 14 of the series of bulletins on the life histories of North American birds, authored by A. C. Bent and published by Smithsonian Institution, will appear in the spring. It includes the flycatchers, larks, and swallows.

Volume 15, covering crows and jays, and titmice, is also ready for the printer. Work on Volume 16, on nuthatches, creepers, wren-tits, dippers, wrens, mockingbirds and the thrashers, has been started.

WATERFOWL

We quote from The Wilson Bulletin for September:
"Within recent years there

has been agitation for an increase of the hunting season on the basis of the Bureau of Biological Survey report of an increase of five to ten per cent among the waterfowl. True, there has been an increase; but at the rate of a five per cent annual increase, it would require 14 years to restore the waterfowl population to 50,000,000 birds, one-half of the 1930 population which was considered a crisis population at that time.' (from G. N. Rysgaard, 'A Short History of Waterfowl,' Conservation Volunteer, June, 1941.)

"Parenthetically, it is encouraging to find a statement of this kind in the official publication of a state (Minnesota) Conservation Department."

ALUMINUM WORRY

The aluminum shortage has made itself felt in many a field; maybe bird-banders are to feel the pinch. They use about 800 pounds of the metal each year; racing pigeon and poultry breeders use still more. So far, a satisfactory substitute is still to be found. Copper corrodes too rapidly; monel metal is too stiff; plastics are difficult to number.

MORE TRUMPETERS

The 1940 count showed 190 trumpeter swans in the two remaining strongholds of this nearly extinct species; the 1941 count showed 211 of the birds. The swans are in Yellowstone National Park and the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Montana.

It is interesting to note that the long migration is a thing of the past with the species. The birds now shift

only between these two locations and, since the bird is well protected in both places, this change in migration may help in saving the species.

This year included a record of possible breeding on Hegben Lake, Montana, between the two usual sites.

FEATHERED HATS

Any wild bird feathers on hand after April 18, 1947, must be surrendered by the feather industry to the state conservation officers for destruction; so the industry is boosting feather styles to make sure none will be left over. So we can expect to see plenty of emphasis on feathers for millinery for a while.

TROY BRIDGE

Something to keep in mind for next autumn, according to Benton Seguin:

Plenty of sandpipers were to be seen on the mud bars and shore of the Hudson at the Troy bridge last fall. The unusually low water probably was a heavy contributor to the popularity of the section; but it should not be forgotten as a possibility next season.

FARMERS' HELPER

One hundred and forty-one species of insects, nearly all injurious to crops, and 120 species of weed seeds are eaten by the bob-white. A family of two adult and ten young quail will consume some 800,000 insects and 59,000,000 weed seeds in a year!

And yet there are farmers who welcome hunters that kill off the whole population of quail on their farm. The bob-white is locally extirpated.

FIELD TRIPS PLANNED

A schedule of semimonthly field trips has been announced by Barrington S. Havens, field activities chairman. Two of the trips were conducted during November -- to the Christmas Sanctuary, Delanson, with Esly Hallenbeck as the leader on Sunday, November 16, and the other through Central Park on Saturday, November 29, with B. D. Miller as leader. The remainder of the trips through the S. B. C. annual meeting in February include:

Saturday, December 13 - Watervliet Reservoir, George H. Bainbridge.

Sunday, December 21 - Annual Christmas census, Chester N. Moore.

Saturday, January 3 - Collins Lake, Mrs. W. R. Steele and Mrs. George H. Bainbridge.

Sunday, January 18 - Upper Hudson River, H. V. D. Allen.

Saturday, January 31 - Niskayuna, Guy Bartlett.

Sunday, February 15 - Schermerhorn Road, B. S. Havens.

It will be noticed that each month includes one Saturday and one Sunday trip. In the past it has been found that there is no one day available to the entire membership, but it is expected that this alternate schedule will permit more to participate. It will also be noticed that the Sunday trips have been so planned that they will not interfere with the announced schedule of

the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club.

The meeting place for all of the hikes will be at Nott Terrace High School, at 8 a.m.; previous field trips have indicated this school to be centrally located as a meeting place, and to offer advantages as compared to meeting at the field stations. Those having automobiles can assist with the transportation by letting the leader of the trip or Mr. Havens know how many passengers they can accommodate. There are usually some members who would like to go if transportation is available. And it is also true that there have always been sufficient accommodations for all.

These field trips are not beginners' classes -- but that does not mean that beginners will not find the trips useful. Birds are fewer in the winter, and so are the leaves, with the result that observations are more easily made. Even though the birds are fewer, there are plenty of species to be found; and winter trips always offer opportunities for the unexpected, out-of-season rarity.

The December 13 trip into the Watervliet Reservoir territory is of particular interest because it will serve as a preliminary survey of one of the most important territories included in the Christmas trip of December 21. The Christmas census trip, in turn, is considered one of the most interesting and important of all those in the whole year.

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